

Latin American Studies Center News



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Fall 2007

LASC Hosts III Graduate Conference

by Norman Gonzáles

On October 24th and 25th, the Latin American Studies Center (LASC) and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese organized and sponsored the Third Annual Latin American and Caribbean Graduate Student Conference. This year, Leticia Goulias, Marcia Bebianno Simoes and Pablo Calle, from LASC, and Norman González, from the Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese, worked together to promote the conference in numerous departments and programs at the University of Maryland and at other universities in the region. Participants included students from Johns Hopkins University,

Georgetown University, NYU and University of Virginia. A visiting student from La Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar of Ecuador, also joined the conference.

The conference's objective was to create an interdisciplinary space that provided students the opportunity to present their work on Latin America as a point of convergence where different disciplines can relate and pose questions to each other.

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Professor David Sartorius moderates a panel during the Conference

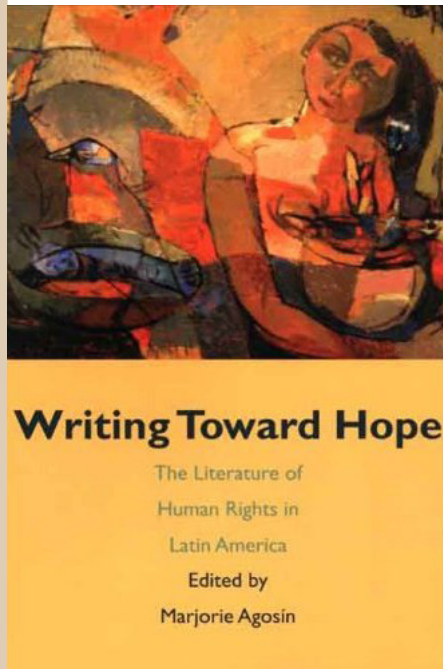


The University of Maryland, College Park

New Latin American Arrivals to UM Libraries

by Ana Trapp

In this section we present some of the latest books that relate to Latin America social sciences and literature. All of these books can be found in the University of Maryland Libraries.



Writing Toward Hope

Anthology

Editor: Marjorie Agosin

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007

672 pages

“Throughout Latin America, writers creatively and peacefully counteracted the culture of fear through art,” states editor Marjorie Agosin. A part of the myriad: Isabel Allende, Mario Benedetti, Julio Cortázar, Rigoberta Menchú, Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda and José Emilio Pacheco. These are among the names that are chosen to form *Writing Toward Hope*, Agosin’s recently published anthology. This US-Chilean scholar, who teaches Spanish at Wellesley College, has been concerned with the issue of human rights in a number of publications. It seems that this book has given her the opportunity to canonize texts originated by authors who suffered violations to their rights in countries all across Latin America and who wrote fiction, essays, plays, poems. These texts are united by a common aim to recover their sense of human dignity and that of the others. All the writers included in the anthology were in prison, many suffered torture and many were forced into exile during the unsettling political times that started in the mid-1960s. As Agosin states in her

introduction, “human rights literature is inseparable from history,” therefore this book offers a valuable twofold possible analysis: the historical value of these texts as documents, and also the aesthetic accomplishments and communicative strengths of each of these as literary texts.

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Making the Americas

Thomas F. O'Brien

Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007

376 pages

The relations between the United States and Latin America are of permanent interest to the academia as well as to the general public. The reality of one same continent divided by two different approaches to politics, business and culture and the interest of the United States to expand its model is what Thomas F. O'Brien, a professor of history at the University of Houston, analyses in this book. His approach to the topic spans from the early days of independence until 2006 and the contemporary controversies over this matter.



Chilean Ex-Presidential Candidate Discusses Latin America's New Left

Tomás Hirsch, ex-presidential candidate in Chile's 1999 and 2005 elections, was invited by LASC to talk about Latin America's 'new left.' Hirsch elaborated on the emergence and development of a strong Latin American socio-political movement that is progressively gaining massive popular adherence. He also addressed the challenges that such a movement confronts in terms of both the prevailing status quo in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, and the goals of social justice and full-fledged democratization it pursues. During his presentation, Hirsch drew from the recent political experience of several Latin American countries, including his own, and the innovative political role that young people and their leaders are playing in the reformulation of the ways Latin American politics are exercised. A lively discussion followed the presentation, which was attended by faculty and students.

Tomas Hirsch is presently a member of the Humanist International. He is dedicated to promoting the regional organization of Latin-American Humanist Parties and Social Organizations. In 1983 he helped found the Chilean Humanist Party, becoming its president from 1994 to 1999. He was also one of the founders of the Coalition of parties for Democracy (CPD) and served as Chile's ambassador to New Zealand between 1990 and 1992, under the democratic government of Patricio Alwyn.



Tomás Hirsch during his presentation at McKeldin Library

Graduate Conference continued from page 1

Students from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and from the Departments of History were able to find common areas of interest, regardless of their different cultural and academic backgrounds.

During this year's conference, six panels were held on Politics, History, Anthropology and Literature with almost 20 papers. Among the participants from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, were Cristina Burneo (19th century Ecuadorian history and Catholicism), Elena Campero (Di Giorgio: 20th century Uruguayan poetry), Alejandra Echazú (Sirens in the Caribbean), Carolina Gómez-Montoya (Argentinian sickness in 19th century literature), Oscar Neidecker (Central America dictatorships) and Diego Panasiti (EZLN and insurgency in México).



The Department of History at UMD played an important role as well, with the participation of

students Sarah Walsh (Eugenics in Latin America), Shane Dillingham (Mexican 1960s media and the 1910 revolution), Reid Gustafson (Gender representations of the working class in Mexico, 1917-1922), Theodore Cohen (History of blackness in Mexican nationalism, 1909-1958) and Katie Witty (The Mexican Guerrilla, 1960-1974).

We are thankful to the Professors who participated in the conference enthusiastically, contributing to the very positive outcomes of the event. Among

others, Carmen Benito-Vessels, Eyda Merediz, Laura Demaría, and Roberta Lavine (Spanish and Portuguese), Daryle Williams and David Sartorius (History), Judith Freidenberg and Janet Chernela (Anthropology), and Nick Copeland, LASC Fellow,

participated in the sessions as speakers, discussants and panel moderators. Mary Kay Vaughan, (History), gave the keynote address on "Transnationalizing Latin American Studies".

Norman González (event organizer), Eyda Merediz and Roberta Lavine, Professors, attending one of the panels.

A Small Step Towards Democracy in Guatemala?

by Nick Copeland, LASC Post-Doctoral Fellow

Nick Copeland is a political anthropologist who has completed two years of fieldwork in Huehuetenango, Guatemala, a rural Mayan-majority department in the northwestern Guatemalan highlands. His dissertation explores the effects of decades of counterinsurgency warfare on contemporary grassroots indigenous political organizations. Nick received his PhD from the University of Texas, Austin in 2007 with support from the H.F.Guggenheim Foundation.

In the runoff election, businessman Alvaro Colom Argueta, from the center-left National Unity Party, (UNE) in his third run for president, beat ex-general Otto Pérez Molina by a margin of 6%. The outcome was surprising because Pérez Molina, from the Patriotic Party (PP), who had campaigned on the promise to pursue a *mano dura* (iron fist) approach to crime, had the lead in all opinion polls for the prior two months by a margin of between 8-10%. The

electoral season was particularly violent, even for Guatemala, with dozens of candidates assassinated—including 14 from the UNE. Most attribute the deaths to organized crime. These were the sixth elections since the 1996 Peace Accords, which ended a 36

year long civil war in which over 200,000 Guatemalans died, mostly Mayan civilians. Why did Colom Argueta win? And what does his victory mean for the future of Guatemala's fledgling democracy?

Many Guatemalans felt that neither party represented them, which probably accounts for a high rate of abstention in the runoff (51.7%). Both agreed to

follow the neoliberal economic model, including the controversial Central American Free Trade Agreement. Finally, neither group planned to directly threaten the power of the oligarchic elite. Still, the differences between the candidates are significant. Pérez Molina has strong ties to the military and the national elite. He is a self-proclaimed authoritarian, trained by the School of the Americas, opposed to human rights and many of the substantive elements of the Peace Accords. In addition, his *mano dura* campaign would place the military directly in civilian matters—a throwback to the pre-Peace Accords era—and prioritize results over human rights. A recent investigation suggests that Pérez Molina might have masterminded the political assassination of Archbishop Juan Gerardi, who was found bludgeoned to death days after the Catholic Church's historical memory project report was released, a document that implicated the military in 97% of the massacres committed in the dirty war. Also, Pérez Molina's rhetoric about respect for indigenous rights was not matched by concrete commitments; and in fact he opposed many organized groups and many demands of the Pan Mayan movement. He bluntly told the leaders of the Agrarian Platform, the peasant movement, that illegal occupations land holdings would not be tolerated—an indication he was prepared to use the army to enforce the "rule of law." Despite this outward commitment to legality, many have cited Pérez Molina's deep connection to organized crime, including narco-trafficking, which infiltrated many political parties and the military. Indeed, Colom Argueta's refusal to succumb to these groups' demands might explain, in part, the disproportionate number of political murders of leaders from his party. Interestingly, President Bush only visited Pérez Molina prior to the runoff elections, ignoring Colom Argueta.

In contrast, Colom Argueta has a history of support for reformist politics and indigenous rights, and he even came in 3rd place in 1998 on a coalition leftist ticket. Colom also trained as a Mayan spiritual guide, and seems disposed to open unprec-

Women line up to vote in the second round of the Presidential elections

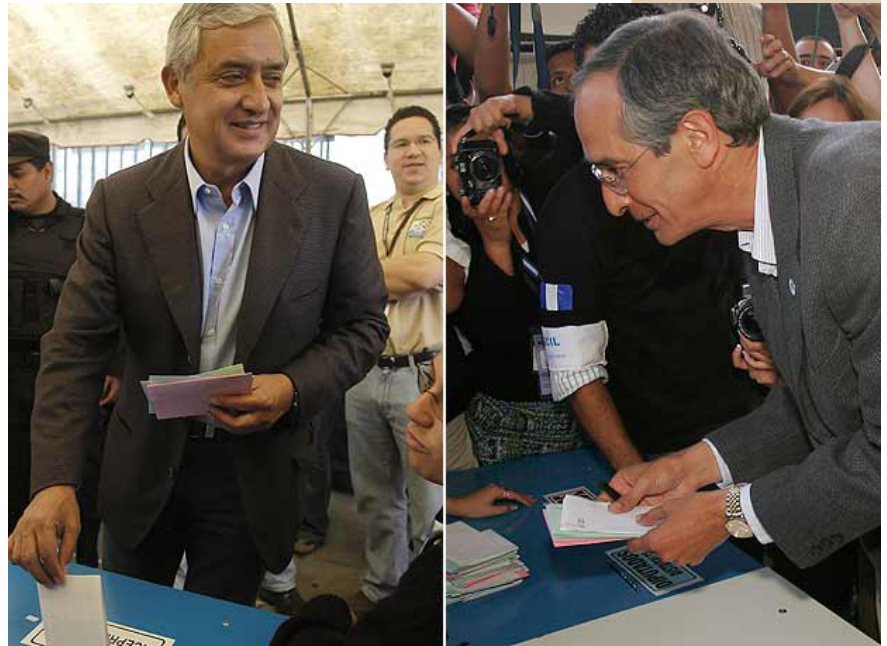


edented spaces for indigenous participation in his new government, as well as for autonomy movements. While also promising to fight crime, including reforming the corrupt National Police, Colom campaigned on the promise that he would make rural development a priority. He argued that real development would solve crime at its roots: in the extreme poverty suffered by over half of all Guatemalans. He also claimed to support the flourishing of a “culture of peace” in Guatemala, symbolized by his party’s icon: a dove. Colom Argueta seems much less likely than Pérez Molina to use state violence to repress social movements, or to continue the policy of exorbitant and unsupervised financial support for the military, which continues to be the country’s most powerful institution and whose affairs are shrouded in secrecy.

Pérez Molina attempted to paint Colom Argueta as weak and incapable of controlling a country like Guatemala where narco-trafficking, crime, and corruption are rampant. In return, Colom attacked Pérez Molina directly on his *mano dura* approach, saying that the country had already had the *mano dura* for 36 years of war, which left 250,000 dead. He warned that a vote for Pérez Molina was a vote for a return to war, accenting this claim with a reference to his opponent’s involvement in military atrocities.

The election was historic because it was the first time that the election was decided by the rural vote, predominantly by Mayans. In 2003, many indigenous voters had supported ex-dictator general Ríos Montt in his questionably legal, and ultimately failed, bid for the presidency. Mayans supported Ríos Montt despite his opposition to democratic reforms, rampant corruption and his indictment for genocide in the Mayan highlands in the early 1980s. This reversed a long history of participation in reformist politics, including widespread support and sympathy for the guerrilla movement in the late 1970s and until the period of extreme state violence. Beyond whatever resonance of Ríos Montt’s populist discourse, Mayan alignment with neo-authoritarian politics derived from a combination of pessimism about political reform, and development politics that divided communities into competition for state resources. After Colom won a plurality in the first round of elections, and a runoff

was scheduled with Pérez Molina, who had finished a close second, many of the other conservative parties promised their support for the PP.



The fact that Mayans supported a Center-Left candidate might mean that this was the candidate who offered the most projects in return for political support. But such offers from both parties were probably similar. In the end, Mayans chose between the *mano dura* and the military and a candidate focused on deepening peace and democracy through reducing poverty. Many, it seems, voted their conscience, and not out of fear for losing immediate development projects, despite the fact that a PP victory seemed inevitable. Mayans rejected militarism and a symptoms approach to crime in favor of a more substantial social reform. If the major effect of violence was to instill in the population—especially the rural Mayan population—the belief that real political reform was impossible, this election might suggest that the hold of violence on Mayan politics is finally loosening.

It remains to be seen how much flexibility Colom has to pursue a reformist agenda in the face of considerable pressure from Guatemalan elites, the military, and international financial institutions. But it seems, at least, that his presidency will deepen democracy in Guatemala, if only by creating a climate in which grassroots politics and new political imaginaries can flourish, and rebuild the hope destroyed by decades of state repression.

Guatemalan Presidential Candidates, Otto Perez Molina and Alvaro Colon Argueta casting their votes for the second round election

Engineers Without Borders Project Wins National Award in Brazil

by Peter Chang, Professor, A. James Clark School of Engineering

In 2006, an Engineers Without Borders (EWB) team from the University of Maryland implemented a project in Ilha das Peças in southern Brazil. The project was a collaboration with the Centro de Es-

laboration among universities and a large number of agencies to create something useful for a needy community.

The project began as a sanitation project. Dr. Peter Chang of the Civil and Environmental Engineering



Tamara Van Kaick, Naina Pierre, and Manyu Chang, receiving the award



tudo do Mar (CEM) of the Universidade Federal de Paraná. Participants and contributions to the project included local NGOs: Ecodamata, MarBrasil, and International Ocean Institute, local and federal agencies: municipal government of Guaraqueçaba, Instituto Brasileiro de Meio Ambiente (IBAMA), and Insituto Ambiental do Paraná (IAP), the local sanitation company, SANEPAR, and the local electric company, COPEL. Quad-Lock, a manufacturer of a proprietary construction system also donated material and shipping cost to facilitate the construction of the project. In short, the project was a col-

Department, who serves as a faculty advisor for a team of EWB, learned from Ecodamata, a Brazilian NGO, that a rural fishing community on the coast of Brazil, Ilha das Peças, had incidences of gastrointestinal diseases among 97% of its population. The problem was initially thought to be caused by contaminated drinking water. The local practice of using shallow wells adjacent to septic systems (within feet) was close to drinking wastewater directly. The government's response was to pipe water in from the nearest source over 20 miles away.

2008-2009 Post-Doctoral Fellowship Competition

We are pleased to announce the competition for residential fellowships for Fall 2008 and Spring 2009. For the current round, the Center will particularly welcome proposals that address issues focusing on culture and democracy, governance and civil society, literature and ethnicity, and migration from Asia to Latin America.

For further information and applications contact us or visit our website at www.lasc.umd.edu

Survey of the population a year and three years after clean water was made available showed that the availability of the clean water did not improve the problem of gastrointestinal diseases. In some cases, it worsened.

Dr. Chang along with two students and a professional engineer, Albert McCullough, visited Ilha das Peças to help find a solution to their problem. They discovered on this planning trip that the principal problem was the sanitation system. The water table there was within inches of the ground surface. Traditional septic and percolation system that they used on the island did not work. During rain or high tides, wastewater overflowed. The population on the island has the custom of walking barefoot, and parasites are transmitted through domestic animals and directly through the skin.

Another problem was the shortage of water during the dry season. When the demand for water was higher than the supply, the villagers supplemented water from their old wells. The CWT team suggested changing the wastewater treatment system to a constructed wetland (CWT) system, and building a 30 cubic meter tank to supplement their water supply. Numerous local NGOs joined in the effort, which was heartily supported by the local and state government agencies.

The team used an innovative construction process to build the water tank in 10 days; the local method would have taken over 50 days to build something similar. The tank was built at a fraction of the cost estimated by the local water company. The wastewater treatment was an innovative vertical flow micro wetland, designed for the topography and limited land available on the island. For their effort, the team and their Brazilian collaborators won the highly competitive Santander Banespa award for Science and Innovation for social responsibility, a national award given in Brazil annually. The



award includes a cash prize of R\$50,000, equivalent of US\$25,000. The team donated the entire cash award to the community for the operation and maintenance of the tank and sanitation system. The award was received by their Brazilian collaborators, Tamara Van Kaick, Náina Pierre, and Manyu Chang.



The project also won a highly coveted environmental award, 1° Prêmio Brasil de Meio Ambiente, a Brazilian environmental prize for best work with water, given by *Journal do Brasil*, the national newspaper and one of the most important source of news in Brazil.

*Above: Project team at the construction site
Below: Constructed wetland system*

Visit our website at: <http://www.lasc.umd.edu>



We encourage you to contribute to our Web Calendar of Latin America-related events in the Washington, D.C. area. Please send pertinent information regarding place, date, and time, as well as the title of the event and a brief description, to: lasc@umd.edu

UM Students in Study Abroad Program Visit the Amazonian Kayapo Nation

by Janet Chernela, Professor, Department of Anthropology

During Summer 2007, UM's Study Abroad Program offered an Anthropology Field course among the Kayapo of the Brazilian Amazon. This six-credit class considered conservation partnering from the

security of their lands. The class visited and worked with one such innovative partnership in which indigenous peoples participate in decision-making and knowledge-sharing.

The Kayapo of the southeastern portion of the basin, have been especially impressive in their organized, militant protection of their lands. Kayapo territories now represent one of the largest remaining stretches of neotropical rainforest in the world. The Kayapo, who continue to practice hunting and horticulture in their reserve, are also impressive negotiators for their rights. They are best known for their precedent-setting triumph in garnering international support to halt plans to build a large hydroelectric project in 1988.

The Pinkaiti Research Station has been in Aukre, center of the Indigenous Area Kayapo, for fifteen years. During this time they have studied the sustainability of the hunting practices and their impact on fauna in the Kayapo Reserve. Pinkaiti Station, now part of Conservation International, is not generally open to outsiders. In a rare partnership with Pinkaiti, the University of Maryland has arranged for a small class of students to visit this reserve, live among the Kayapo, and be taught by them along with researchers.

The objectives of the field course were to gain an



Professor Janet Chernela, Department of Anthropology and Latin American Studies, receives body paint design by Modpari, in a Kayapo village in the Amazon basin of Brazil.

standpoints of indigenous communities and conservationists. The course, taught by UM anthropologist Janet Chernela, and CI ecologist Barbara Zimmerman, combined anthropology, history, and tropical ecology. The course addressed biodiversity concepts, tropical forest ecology, and conservation; it also explored valuation of nature, knowledge of plant and animal interactions, and the short and long-term priorities of one of the most prominent indigenous nations of Amazonia, the Kayapo.

The Amazon basin is the largest remaining tract of tropical rainforest in the world. Many now attribute this fact to occupation of the land by indigenous peoples who have managed and defended it for millennia. In the face of growing threats to both the landscape and people, the relationship of indigenous peoples to the forests in which they live has received new interest. From a strategic standpoint, a number of indigenous groups of the Brazilian Amazon now participate in arrangements of "Partnering" with outside entities, intended to increase



Laura Lehman, University of Maryland student, carrying a basket of manioc tubers she harvested in a visit to one family's garden in the Kayapo village, Aukre.

understanding of: 1) socio-economic dynamics of the Amazonian frontier and drivers of deforestation; 2) tropical forest biology with special attention to regeneration; 3) a forest-dependent indigenous culture and its struggle to determine the future of its land and culture. Within conservation and development, the course addressed the causes of deforestation and threats to Kayapo land and culture (ranching, logging, goldmining); territorial control by the Kayapo; and new and recent partnerships.

Professor Chernela is planning to organize the course again for Summer 2008. For more information on the upcoming program, contact chernela@gmail.com.



Brazil Travel Study Program Takes Students to Rio de Janeiro

Stephen Capelli, University of Maryland student, at Conservation International's Ecological Research Station in the Kayapo Reserve, Brazilian Amazon.



Students met with Professor Ricardo Motta Miranda (center), Rector of the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro. Professor Miranda was a former participant in the Maryland Partners of the Americas exchange program.

by Lowell W. Adams, Professor, Department of Environmental Science & Technology

At 4:00 am on Friday, July 20, 2007, six excited University of Maryland students and one professor assembled at Dulles International Airport for a 7:00 am flight to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. They were embarking on a 2-week exchange program in its 15th year of operation.

Since 1993, the University of Maryland's Natural Resources Management Program and Office of International Programs have provided leadership to a student exchange program between the States of Maryland and Rio de Janeiro. Every other year, a small group of Brazilian students and one or two faculty members come to Maryland to learn about its educational and academic facilities, environ-



Students learned about conservation of the endangered golden lion tamarin at Poco das Antas Reserve from Ana Maria Teixeira (second from left), Coordinator of Conservation Areas.

mental NGOs, related government agencies, and research foundations; in the intervening years, a like number of students and faculty from the University of Maryland travel to the State of Rio de Janeiro. The exchange program is the result of an agreement between University of Maryland, the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, and Fluminense Federal University. The travel-study program is a cooperative effort among the universities and Partners of the Americas, a “people to people” exchange program initiated by President Kennedy in the 1960s.

After their 14-hour flight to Rio, with a stop in Panama City, Adelia Bles, Kate Bissel, Jeff Chen, Ana Chuquin, Lauren Stanton, Shelby Watson, and Professor Lowell Adams were ready to call it a day. The next morning they were off to Ilha Grande for the weekend. There the students relaxed, enjoyed the sun and beach, and hiked the ecological trails. The island was beautiful, with rain-forested mountains reaching all the way to the sea.

Students spent much of the first week on the campus of the Federal Rural University, visiting several departments and programs, including the veterinary school, agroecology farm, and aquaculture station. At the latter facility, Brazilian students discussed their research projects. This student-to-student exchange was an important goal of the program. The group met Dr. Ricardo Motta Miranda, University Rector, an early participant in the Partners of the Americas program.

The visit to the Poço das Antas Golden Lion Tamarin Reserve was at or near the top of everyone’s list of highlights. Ana Maria de Godoy Teixeira, coordinator of conservation areas, explained her work with private landowners and forest corridors. Over 20 years, the population of endangered golden lion tamarins has increased from 200 to more than 1,200. Conservationists hope to maintain 2,000 golden lion tamarins in the wild. Up at 3:15 am for a 4:00 am breakfast, the group was off on an early morning excursion into the reserve in search of tamarins. With use of radiotelemetry, the Brazilian guide located a family of about 12 that was being closely studied by researchers. Everyone had good views of the small monkeys.

From the tamarin reserve, students traveled to the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Niterói, where, among other things, they learned about water treatment and delivery for the city of Niterói, and mangroves and beach restoration. They discussed research topics with students from Fluminense Federal University. Excursions to the Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro and to Tijuca National Park rounded out the program. At 3:20 am on Friday, August 3, the group headed home, with a long stopover in Panama City, where they had a city and canal tour, arriving at Dulles International Airport after midnight, tired, but happy to have had such a wonderful experience.

LASC Faculty Profile

Laurie Frederik Meer Department of Theatre

Laurie Frederik Meer (PhD, Anthropology, Chicago 2006) recently joined the Department of Theatre as an Assistant Professor of Performance Studies. Her doctoral research was carried out in the rural mountain regions of Cuba (Villa Clara and Guantánamo Provinces), researching the transformation of political consciousness and national identity through artistic expression and mediation. Fieldwork was conducted by living with professional theatre groups traveling through some of the most isolated regions of Cuba to bring “culture” to rural residents.

Her areas of specialization include Latin America and the Caribbean, the African Diaspora, performance and creative process, cultural politics and social protest. She is currently teaching a course called Ethnography & Performance, and in 2008 will teach courses on Censorship, Subversive Culture, and Latin American Art and Political Identity.

Professor Frederik Meer has published articles in the *Journal for Latin American Anthropology*, *Anthropology News*, *The Drama Review*, *Gestos*, and in an upcoming volume called *The Special Period: Cuban Culture in the 1990s* (Palgrave 2008). She has also published in Spanish in the Cuban journals *Conjunto* and *Tablas*. Her current project is a book version of her doctoral dissertation entitled “The Comedy and Tragedy of 21st Century Cuban Identity: Theatre and Performance in the Zones of Silence.” In her spare time, Meer is a serious competitor in Ballroom and Latin Dancing.



David Sartorius Department of History

David Sartorius specializes in colonial Latin American history with a focus on race and the African diaspora in the Caribbean. Since 1996 he has traveled regularly to Cuba for archival research, and he is currently completing a book manuscript entitled “Ever Faithful: Race and Loyalty in Nineteenth-Century Cuba.” He has also published “My Vassals: Free-Colored Militias and the Ends of Spanish Empire” in the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*. After receiving the Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2003, Sartorius taught at Whittier College and was a postdoctoral fellow at the LASC in 2006.

Sartorius teaches introductory courses on colonial and modern Latin American history as well as upper-division and graduate courses on colonial Latin America, Caribbean history, gender and sexuality in Latin America, and Afro-diasporic dialogues in the Americas. He has served as chair of the International Scholarly Relations Committee of the Conference on Latin American history and is currently a member of the organizing collective of the Tepoztlán Institute for the Transnational History of the Americas, an annual gathering in Mexico of North American and Latin American scholars.





Briefly Noted

- LASC, together with the Department of Public Safety and the Hispanic Heritage Coalition, organized a presentation on “Campus Safety Issues.” The presentation aimed at creating awareness about safety issues on campus, particularly among the Latino community.

- As part of the 2007 Lecture Series, LASC and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese hosted Marysa Navarro, Charles Collis Professor of History at Dartmouth College, and Ana Lau, Professor of History at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana in Mexico, to talk about women in Latin American politics. The presentation was entitled “Transnational Feminism: The Making of the Inter-American commission of Women.”

- Roberta Lavine, Department of Spanish and Portuguese and LASC Executive Committee member, hosted the second “Higher Education in Latin America” annual meeting. Participants from Universidad de Concepción, Chile, Universidad

de Lima, Perú and the Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial, Ecuador, attended the event to discuss achievements and establish the agenda for the coming year.

- Juan Recacochea, author of *American Visa*, the best selling novel on Bolivian history, was invited to UMD by LASC to present his book and share some clips of the film inspired by his novel. The discussion featured literary topics, the relationship between the novel, the translation and the screen, and current events in US-Latin American relations that emerge in the book.



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