

# LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN STUDIES

## SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER

### A Message from the Program Director, César Barros A.



As the 2018-2019 academic year closes, I am happy to report that our program is strong and that we have been working diligently to strengthen our presence on campus and the in the Hudson Valley community. This year we organized and co-sponsored many amazing events related to different topics, disciplines, and spheres of action. We also designed a new class, LAM271 Latinx America, that will be offered next Spring semester. The new website content is ready to go, so the renovated site will be available before we come back from the summer intercession. I am also happy to report that many more students have joined our program as majors and minors. We finished this semester with the Capstone Project Presentation of two of our dear students: Natalie Aguilar and Melissa Twomey (in the photo). They made us proud with the level of their committed research and critical perspectives. I want to congratulate Melissa who is graduating as a double major in International Studies and LACS and also want to wish a happy study abroad experience to Natalie who is going to Buenos Aires for her last semester of her undergraduate studies.

We have many things to do to keep developing as a program. I am going on Sabbatical for the next academic year and I am thrilled to announce that my dear colleague Dr. Deyanira Rojas-Sosa will be Interim Director while I am gone. I am certain that under her leadership the program will only become stronger. We have been working with our students for the upcoming change of our program's name. After consultation with the Faculty Committee and a survey organized by the Museo Escolar, the Spanish Club and LASU, we have decided to change our name to Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx Studies Program. Hopefully this change will be approved the next academic year. We have a new colleague joining our program—Javier Gastón-Greenberg, PhD Candidate in the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures at SUNY Stony Brook. He will be teaching LAM270 next Fall.,

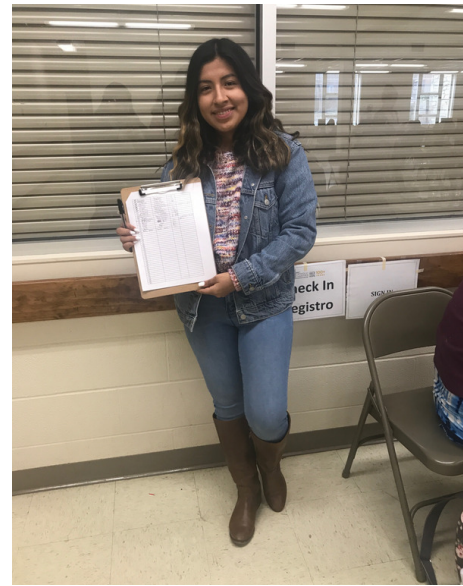
I want to thank everybody involved in our program for an amazing academic year—our students and student organizations, our faculty, and our program's secretary Cookie Chandler. I also want to extend my gratitude to Meredith VanEtten, who has helped me a great deal, and Natalie Aguilar, our program's student assistant for all her enthusiasm and assistance.

# Students in Solidarity with Ulster County Immigrant Community

In the spacious basement of St. Joseph's Church, various stations were placed for a day's worth of work in immigration services. On Friday, April 12th the Church held an information session and immigration clinic to assist the local immigrant community with legal services. Additional resources were available as well, such as family services, food and clothing.

Professor Luz Porras, who helped organizing the clinic, noted that this event was the first of its kind in New Paltz and Ulster County in general. Catholic Charities, who co-coordinated the event, tend to operate within Poughkeepsie and Newburgh, which comprises of Dutchess and Orange County, respectively. The project stems from a partnership between the nonprofit Catholic Charities and the NYS implemented Liberty Defense Project, a state-led public-private project to assist immigrants, regardless of status, in obtaining access to legal services and process. In collaboration, the two launched an online platform where volunteers from Catholic Charities are provided the tools necessary to effectively assist vulnerable immigrant communities.

The initiative had the support from LACS. We organized a "Know Your Rights" sessions for information, planning and fraud prevention for students and the general public.



Ultimately 40 students signed up to volunteer that day. Students had the opportunity to facilitate in the screening process, in interpreting (translating from Spanish to English) and assisting in logistical tasks such as greeting and signing in attendees, coordinating flow from screening to legal checkout with attorneys and compiling application packets.

A week prior to the clinic, students were asked to attend a training session to go over their tasks and be prepared to know the overall work flow. Students who volunteered came from various fields of study, such as LACS, Spanish and Human Services, and benefited from receiving hands-on experience in immigration services, a field that could always use more helping hands.



PHOTO BY SCOTT BARFIELD  
PHOTOGRAPHY

Dr. Jessica Pabón (Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies) taught a new course called *Feminist Perspectives on Decolonization* in which students explore the material and epistemic legacies of colonialism in different regions of the world using postcolonial, decolonial, and Indigenous feminist frameworks; after the break, the course turns to Puerto Rico as a case study. She continues to have an active research agenda, and was recently invited to submit her essay "Digital Diasporic Tactics for a Decolonized Future: Tweeting in the Wake of #HurricaneMaria," to a special issue in *Theatre History Studies*. She also designed a "Boricua Feminists" tote bag to sell for her #FeministsforPuertoRico visibility and fundraising campaign on behalf of the queer feminist organization, the Center for Embodied Pedagogy and Action in Puerto Rico.



**You can order the tote bag here:**

<http://bit.ly/boricuatote>

## FACULTY FOCUS

Prof. Ben Junge of Anthropology has spent the spring semester at the Wilson Center for International Center for Scholars, a non-partisan policy thinktank/research institute in Washington, DC. Here, Junge is focusing on analysis and writing projects linked to his research in Brazil—a three-year anthropological study of political consciousness among poor and working-class people. At present, he is working on a book-length ethnography of one neighborhood located in the northeastern city of Recife, focusing on how the working-poor understand themselves as citizens during a moment of deepening political and economic crisis. He is also organizing an edited volume of anthropological studies of how various marginalized populations in Brazil have responded to the crisis in the recent years (working title: "*Precarious Democracy: Ethnographies of Hope, Despair, and Resistance in Brazil after the Pink Tide*"). That plus ongoing analysis of survey data about the lifestyles, consumer practices and political attitudes of Brazil's so-called "new middle class." When time allows, Junge enjoys exploring our nation's capital and is excited to dive back into New Paltz life at the end of the summer to reunite with his LACS colleagues and devoted students.



Prof. Martin Kei Green-Rogers of the theatre department is the President of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA). Founded in 1985, LMDA is a non-profit organization that "holds the belief that theater is a vital art form that has the power to nourish, educate, and transform individuals and their communities and that dramaturgy is central to the process of theater-making." The organization is currently in the process of creating an LMDA Mexico Chapter and planning their 2020 Conference in Mexico City.



## FACULTY FOCUS



History Prof. Christopher Albi presented a paper at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago on January 2019 on mining law in Colonial Mexico. Professor Albi has been invited to give a public presentation on April 2 in the SUNY Orange Global Initiative series on the Mexico-US relations. His course, *Environmental History of Latin America*, has been approved by the curriculum committee for permanent inclusion in the schedule of courses.

Last semester, Sociology Prof. Roberto Velez-Velez published "Cambio desde abajo y desde adentro: Notes on Centros de Apoyo Mutuo in post-María Puerto Rico" in *Latino Studies Journal*, co-authored by J. Villarrubia-Mendoza (Colgate U). This brief article presents preliminary observations on their study of post-Hurricane Maria community recovery response processes in Puerto Rico. Prof. Velez-Velez has currently joined the PR Rebuild Research Group at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (Centro) in CUNY Hunter College and will be spending the 2019-2020 academic year in Puerto Rico for immersed field research to examine the community residents' perception and reception of recovery initiatives in their communities. Professor Velez-Velez expects to draw a new course in sociology of disasters in Latin America from this work in the near future.





Teaching all levels of Spanish allows Prof. Fitzpatrick to incorporate language, culture and literature from different regions of the Spanish-speaking world in all her classes. Though some of the classes focus on Spain, the deep relationship with Latin America is always relevant. Her areas of research include modern Spanish poetry, drama and film, as well as Transatlantic Studies; since she is interested in cultural borrowings through the Spain-Latin America relationships of today. In the Fall Prof. Fitzpatrick will be teaching SPA460 *Negotiating Identity*, cross-listed with LACS. The context for this course is Spain's recent shift from a country of emigration to having the largest immigrant population after the U.S. – something many people don't know. Within that context, the class will look at popular literature, film and television to deconstruct the immigrant as Other, paying close attention to race, ethnicity, gender and class. It will also explore how images of these historic female-led migrations from Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, as projected through contemporary Spanish media, affect the very question of identity.

## FACULTY FOCUS

Carolyn Corrado is a Lecturer in the sociology department and new affiliate in LACS. She has been teaching at SUNY New Paltz since 2013, after earning her M.A. in Women and Gender Studies and a Ph.D. in Sociology from SUNY Albany. Her teaching and research interests center on the intersection of race, class and gender, specifically as it relates to social inequalities, identities, and children/youth. She most often teaches Introduction to Sociology and Social Inequalities in the U.S., and cycles through various upper-division sociology courses, such as Race, Class, and Gender, Sociology of Children and Childhood, The Social Construction of Whiteness, and Research Methods. Specifically in Race, Class, and Gender, which is cross-listed with LACS, the class spends a large segment of the course discussing Mexican migrants (specifically indigenous Triqui migrants from Oaxaca) and the inequalities they face based on race, ethnicity, class, and citizenship status in Mexico, on their journey to the U.S., and while they are in the U.S. In addition, the experiences and identities of Latinx individuals are woven throughout the course, especially as they consider gender and sexism, sexuality and heterosexism, families, education, and media and popular culture. "I am glad to be a part of the LACS department as an affiliate and look forward to working with students and faculty going forward!" said Corrado.



# Student and Professor Doing Research Together

Last semester we introduced Francesca Arecy and Professor Deyanira-Rojas-Sosa's research titled *Ideologies about Race and Bodies in Latinas' Discourses about Hair and Beauty*. Since then, Francesca and Dr. Rojas-Sosa traveled to Belo Horizonte, Brazil, where they presented their research at the Simpósio Internacional de Linguística, Cognição e Cultura (LCC).

Francesca says that they received great feedback from fellow presenters and students who attended the conference. She told us that the concept that the curlier and kinkier hair is a marker of women's blackness was shared among Brazilians, as expressed by those who attended the presentation. She added that Brazilians have made strides, and that the different ways of wearing one's hair are much more accepted and appreciated within Brazilian society. Francesca told us that in the United States there are steps that have been taken in order to break these stereotypes of what a Latina looks like (slim, light skinned, straight hair, etc.). In fact, earlier this year there was a law passed that bans hair discrimination. These legal actions as well as more Latinas beginning to accept and love their natural hair is how one day Latinas will be able to wear their hair in its natural form.

Francesca and Dr. Rojas-Sosa are looking forward to publishing their research study in an academic journal in the near future.



## Francesca tells us about her trip to Brazil

Brazil captivated my heart in many different ways: with its culture, politics, student activism, education, diversity, language and its natural beauty. While in Brazil, Dr. Rojas-Sosa and I visited two cities: Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro. Belo Horizonte is where we presented our research at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (FUMG). Attending public university for students is free, which means that everyone has the opportunity to get an education. Students made their university their own, where murals were painted on walls and they have created informal social places throughout the school. Students are highly involved with activism and politics, and its visible within the university. There were political phrases, the name Marielle, stickers of her face and so much more all over the walls. I came to discover that Marielle Franco meant something huge to Brazilians, especially to people my age. Franco was a Brazilian politician, feminist and human rights activist. She was a city councilor of the Municipal Chamber of Rio de Janeiro for the Socialism and Liberty Party. After giving a speech, she and her driver were assassinated on March 14, 2018. Franco was an important figure for Brazilians as she spoke out against police brutality in the favelas, was a queer woman, feminist and represented those with no voice. She was a powerful figure in Brazil. Her assassination created riots all over Brazil and the people wanted answers. Learning about Franco and the impact that she had on many young people left me wanting to know more about her life and her contribution to the Brazilian society.

A couple days later Dr. Rojas-Sosa and I flew over to Rio de Janeiro, where she was invited to give a talk at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). What I saw in FUMG, I also noticed at UFRJ, in terms of the students, activism, culture, diversity and so on. Dr. Rojas-Sosa's talk brought up many questions and interest among the students and faculty that attended. After the conference and the talk, we got to be tourists! We walked around all day in Rio de Janeiro. We learned more about its history, people, rode the Metro and discovered how its very city-like but still has an awing touch of nature to it. The language barrier was tougher than I thought. I figured that since I was fluent in Spanish, I would automatically understand Portuguese (definitely not the case!). By the end of the week however, I was able to say phrases such as "não falo português. fala Inglês ou espanhol?" and of course "obrigada!" My communication was limited but it was a huge learning experience for me. I never thought I'd be able to find a country where I see myself growing and residing in: Brazil is definitely it. My short time in Brazil was incredible and I am looking forward for my next adventure in this country!

# Capstone Projects!

Melissa Twomey's (LACS and International Relations) focused on the impact of Disaster Capitalism in communities and ecosystems, specially in Puerto Rico. In her capstone project she proposes an eco-socialist approach to re-invent policy, and productive and consumptive practices in order to face the ecological and economic crises of the present.



Natalie Aguilar (LACS and Journalism) focused on the effects the assassination of Mexican journalist have in the country's freedom of the press and democratic processes. She concentrated specially in the effects of self-censorship imposed on journalists by this ever-growing violence against them.



**Be Sure to Follow LACS on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook!**



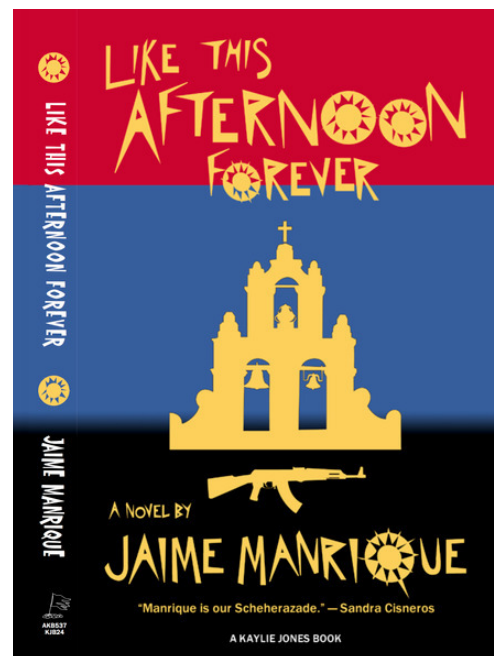
Last semester, the LACS program highlighted Prof. Luz Porras' new service-learning component in her class, Communication and Culture in Spanish. Professor Porras' collaboration with Vida Real, a church in the city of Kingston, allows students to teach English to Spanish speaking immigrants and Native Spanish speakers give their time teaching beginner Spanish to indigenous residents.

## Events and Activities



On April 25, the Spanish Club ventured to The Brooklyn Museum to see *Frida Kahlo: Appearances can be Deceiving*. The exhibition held more than 300 of Kahlo's personal objects such as examples of Kahlo's Tehuana clothing, contemporary and pre-Colonial jewelry, and some of the many hand-painted corsets and prosthetics used by the artist during her lifetime and featured several of paintings and sketches.

On April 18 we had the pleasure to have Jaime Manrique, renowned Colombian novelist, essayist and poet. Manrique has written extensively about Latin American and US Latinx queer experiences. He visited Professor Aldana's Survey of Latin American & Caribbean Literature class and then he gave a reading for the whole campus community. Thank you Professor Aldana for giving us the opportunity to meet him and get to know his work!





# Visit of Dr. Kim Potowski

This semester we had the pleasure to organize a visit by renowned linguist Kim Potowski (University of Illinois, Chicago). On April 29, in front of a completely full auditorium, she gave a lively talk about US Spanish, discrimination and empowerment in heritage speaker language pedagogy.

**Spanish in the U.S.: Myths and Realities**  
**Dr. Kim Potowski**

Is "Spanglish" a positive or a derogatory term?  
Is a single U.S. Spanish dialect likely to emerge?  
What are the best ways to encourage Spanish development among heritage speakers?



Dr. Kim Potowski is a Professor of Spanish Linguistics in the Department of Hispanic & Italian Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She directs the Heritage Spanish program and is the founding director of its summer study abroad program in Oaxaca, Mexico. Her research focuses on Spanish in the U.S. and connections between language and ethnic identity. Her advocacy for the value of dual language education in promoting bilingualism and academic achievement was the focus of her 2013 TEDx talk "No child left monolingual!"



# LACS Classes Offered in Fall 2019

LAM270	Introduction to Latin American Studies	Javier Gastón-Greenberg
BLK 315	Black and Latino Child Lit	Nada Halloway
FRN320	Francophone Cultures	Paul Fenouillet
GEO393	Geographies of Justice	Melissa Rock
HIS277	LTN AM History to 1825	Christopher Albi
LIN493	Bilingualism	Oksana Laleko
POL371	Latin American Politics	Philip Mauceri
POR101	Elementary Portuguese 1	
SED358	Education Across Borders	Susan Brooks
SOC362	Race, Class, and Gender	Carolyn Corrado
SPA 202	Intermediate Spanish 2	
SPA301	Communication and Culture in Spanish	Luz Porras
SPA315	Spanish for Native Speakers	Deyanira Rojas-Sosa
SPA361	Communication and Writing in Spanish	
SPA372	Culture of Latin America	Ligia Aldana
SPA376	Survey of Latin American Literature	Ligia Aldana
SPA460	Negotiating Identity	Patricia Fitzpatrick
SPA476	Growing up Latina/o in the United States	Ligia Aldana
THE208	Latin America Through the Arts	Sandie Poels-Luna
THE327	Race, Gender, and Performance	Martine Green-Rogers
WOM324	Gender and Sexuality in Hip Hop	Jessica Pabon

## Contact Information

César Barros A.  
LACS Program Director  
Phone: (845) 257- 3489  
barrosc@newpaltz.edu  
Office: Old Main 303C