¡Puro cine! A Winter Trip to Costa Rica

By Luis Alberto Rodríguez Cortés

In January, I traveled for the first time to Costa Rica with a group of seven graduate students from KU. The one-week program offered various sessions on Transnational Film Studies that were led by Dr. Tamara Falicov and Dr. Michael Baskett, from the KU Film and Media Studies Department, in conjunction with other professors and researchers from Costa Rica. The goal was to analyze and reflect on the phenomenon of transnationality in Central American cinema. Since this was my first visit to Costa Rica, I took advantage of the experience and arrived ahead of the rest of the group. I packed as much as I could into those three short days, exploring the city life of San José, soaking in the Arenal hot springs and immersing myself in the incredible amount of biodiversity that is preserved in the Parque Nacional Manuel Antonio.

The staff members of the Universidad de Costa Rica arranged the activities throughout the week and made us all feel particularly welcomed. They definitely upheld the national motto, pura vida.

My morning activities consisted of different excursions related to the country's film industry. For example, we were able to visit the Universidad de Costa Rica, the Costa Rican Center of Cinema Production, and the School of Cinema at Veritas University, in addition to museums, libraries and other interesting cultural sites. During the afternoons, we viewed recent Costa Rican films and then participated in discussion that was led by the professors and film experts.

Having the chance to put into practice my knowledge of theory, transnationality, and cinema was very rewarding, especially because our group members came from many different education backgrounds. My favorite session was when we had the chance to meet Laura Astorga, a director of Princesas Rojas (2013), an internationally awarded Costa Rican / Venezuelan film. She shared with us a unique perspective of the current state of the Central American film industry and production.

Even though it was a short stay, during my free time I had the chance to learn more about the culture in the city of San Jose. The last day of our stay, we visited Playa Tortuga, an island located in the Pacific coast of Costa Rica. We explored the coastline, spent the day relaxing on the beach, and watched the beautiful sunset on a catamaran. It was the perfect way to conclude an enriching week of educational activities.

The week in Costa Rica is one that I will never forget. I am glad I could meet not only people directly related with the film production in Costa Rica, but also people working with culture and literature, which are the main focus of my studies. The trip gave me the chance to know first-hand the challenges and accomplishments that Central American cinema has faced during the last decade, which will prove to be an invaluable resource to obtaining a broader understanding of Latin American cultural productions.
Hola a todos,

As usual, we have had a very active semester and we include many articles that highlight our activities here. We were very pleased to receive funding from the Tinker Foundation, which allows us to support Graduate Student Field Research to Latin America and we awarded 11 people to travel this summer. We have some additional funding for the year and will offer further awards in September for people who want to spend 2-4 weeks during the winter break conducting research in the Spanish or Portuguese speaking countries of Latin America or the Caribbean. Our workshops on applying for the Tinker were well attended and I encourage faculty to fan the flames of interest in their students so that we get applicants from a wide variety of fields in September and again next spring. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to know more about the guidelines so that you can apply or can advise your students about how to make a successful application. It is a pleasure for all of us to be able to foment student on-site investigation in the region.

Tony Rosenthal will be stepping down as Associate Director/ Director of Graduate Studies in CLACS as of July 1. He made a two year commitment and he’s done a great job, putting together the graduate symposium, handling curriculum, recruitment, awards, advising, and basically overseeing the Hall Center Seminar (and reapplying for the next one) as well as attending meetings and simply being around the office for advice and input. We will miss his ironic sense of humor and are very grateful for his efforts. He will continue to be active in the Center, of course, and will be the co-director of the Hall Center Seminar for the next three years. I am pleased to say that Rubén Flores has agreed to serve as the next Associate Director and he will be easing in this summer. I’m very pleased he’s decided to join us here.

We’ve worked on many outreach activities these past months, including a Spanish Immersion retreat we co-hosted with Johnson County Community College, ongoing collaboration with the Scott Dual Language Elementary School in Topeka, and an up-coming teacher’s workshop on “Children of Conflict, Children of Peace” which is co-hosted by all the area studies centers. Continuing this kind of outreach is one of the elements we highlight in our Department of Education grant application, due now in early June. We will extend our efforts to prepare globally competent students at the K-12 level, as well as in higher ed. We are working to innovate and maximize impact in Language and Area Studies training by developing online/hybrid courses for Quichua and Kaqchikel, developing new classes that further integrate CLACS to issues in Environmental Studies, Indigenous Nations Studies, classes at the Medical School and expand to include Women and Development. While I will request funding for annual cluster awards, I will ask faculty to collaborate with their colleagues in regional Community Colleges, Schools of Education, or with folks from places that have not had strong exposure to international opportunities before. If we receive NRC funding, these activities and others will fit into a Rebranding/Informational Campaign that demonstrates how our many services and resources are intended for use beyond the University of Kansas campus and reveals our activities in the surrounding areas. Professor John Hoopes (KU, Anthropology) and Julia Good Fox (Haskell Native American University) are putting forward a joint conference on Trans-American Native Identities, which I will include in the proposal. If you have any other ideas that feature this kind of collaboration that will extend the reach of the Center, I would love to hear them (soon!).

We have our end of the year celebration of Latin American Studies graduates (BAs and MAs) and awards ceremony (Tinker Awards, FLAS, Herzfeld Travel Awards and Stansifer Award) on April 24th 2-4 in the Malott Room at the Union. All CLACS faculty and graduating students and awardees and their families are invited to this event. We are also planning another year-end soccer match and picnic between LACS faculty and students, Saturday May 4th (this is a reprise of the event we held in September). We hope for decent spring weather and would like to field good teams on both sides. There has been some interest in bringing graduate students from Latin America or interested in the region together in the future via the Center and this would be a good opportunity to invite some of these folks out to meet one another. It’s also a chance for us to get together, have fun, celebrate our achievements this year, and affirm our on-going commitment to the importance of Latin American and Caribbean Studies at KU and beyond.

Nos veremos entonces,
Jill
Consequences of War: The Garifuna in Central America

By Michael Crawford

Professor Michael H. Crawford received a Cluster Award from Latin American and Caribbean Studies, entitled: “Consequences of War and Forced Migration among the Garifuna from St. Vincent Island to Central America.” This forced migration of the Garifuna, followed by the colonization of most of the coast of Central America, can be considered a major evolutionary success story. The initial transplanted population of fewer than 2000 persons in 1795 grew to more than 100,000 in 100 years. From the original two founding villages in Honduras in 1800, the Garifuna formed 54 villages from Belize to Nicaragua.

This Cluster Award will permit the sampling of the site of the initial transplanted population on Roatan, Bay Islands, as well as two villages near Trujillo, Honduras. These sites should allow the characterization of the founders from which the 50+ villages arose. We also plan to sample the two most easterly villages in Nicaragua.

This project is based on collaboration with Dr. Edwin Herrera Paz of the Catholic University Medical School of Honduras and the School of Biology, University of Costa Rica. The first round of fieldwork began this January, when current biological anthropology student Kristine Beaty and former biological anthropology student, Norberto Baldi-Salas went to Trujillo and visited the communities of Cristales, Rio Negro and Santa Fe. There they met members of the Garifuna community and collected demographic information and DNA samples from over 200 individuals. This study should contribute to a better understanding of the causes and evolutionary consequences of human migration.

CLACS Receives Grant from Tinker Foundation

Late last fall, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies was delighted to receive a prestigious grant from the Tinker Foundation to fund graduate student research in Latin America. The $15,000 per year grant, in combination with a 1:1 KU match, will provide a total of $90,000 in grant funding for graduate student research in Latin America over the next three years. This funding will allow the Center to provide KU graduate students each year with small grants that will enable them to enhance their research projects with real on-the-ground experience in their focus countries.

The Tinker Foundation, which promotes sustainability, equity and productivity in Latin America and greater understanding of the region in the United States, has supported the Center in the past with Field Research Grants, from 1996-1998, 2001-2004 and 2008-2011. The Foundation requires that grantees wait two years after the end of each grant period before applying again. The Center was fortunate enough to secure funding through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to provide a smaller number of summer field research grants during our two year gap, allowing KU students to continue important work in the region.

During each of the previous Tinker funding periods, at least 60 graduate students were funded for short-term research abroad. These students went on to develop superior research proposals for external funding based on their time in the field as well as superior dissertations and theses. Many are now faculty members themselves, while others have successful careers in private industry, the nonprofit sector, and government service.

Tinker recipients often pursue projects related to public health, conservation, community development, anthropology, culture and education. Project sites may range from the Southern Cone to the Caribbean Islands, and from countries in Central America to the border regions of Mexico.

The competition for Tinker Field Research Grants is open to all KU graduate students whose studies focus on Latin American topics, regardless of their disciplines. This year, a total of 11 research grants were awarded to graduate students from a variety of disciplines, including Film & Media Studies, Geography, History, Latin American Studies, Political Science and Spanish. A list of recipients can be found on page 7.
Faculty Highlight:

Michelle Heffner Hayes
Professor of Dance

As the educational curator for the recent Philadelphia Flamenco Festival, Michelle Heffner Hayes, professor of dance, worked to create an appreciation of flamenco for those who normally wouldn’t be introduced to the dance or the scholarly works that surround it.

During the festival, which ran from March 1-16, Hayes travelled to different neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia connecting a 200-year-old art form to everyday lives and American culture.

In its second year, the Philadelphia Flamenco Festival brought internationally renowned flamenco performers and choreographers to Philadelphia, including Rosario Toledo and Israel and Pastora Galvan, who are siblings and part of a Spanish flamenco dynasty.

These artists have helped evolve flamenco into an overt form of social and political critique. Toledo pushes the observer’s idea of gender by presenting the traditional view of feminine beauty, then distorting it in humorous ways. Israel Galvan has used his work to draw attention to the genocide of the Romani people during World War II.

“It speaks so beautifully to the experience of life,” Hayes said of flamenco. “Most people know what it is to grow up in families or communities that have really specific languages and cultural practices. When we can step outside of that experience and look at different cultures, it teaches us to look at something we’ve done all our lives as being an exotic art form to another culture.”

Hayes draws parallels to hip hop and jazz in the path flamenco has taken from a form of expression for southern Spain’s 19th century underclass to part of the country’s national identity. “The forms originated in marginalized cultures that then became part of a commercialized industry and eventually synonymous with a national culture,” Hayes said.

Hayes wrote “Flamenco: Conflicting Histories of the Dance,” which was published in 2009 and is one of the few books written in English about the dance. She is currently co-editing “Flamenco on the Global Stage: New Writings in Flamenco Dance Studies,” which will be printed later this year.

The book will translate scholarly articles into English as well as pull from amateur historians who are aficionados of flamenco, but haven’t had their works published in academic settings. In the book, Hayes will look at how flamenco has transcended Spain’s national identity to become an identifier in its own right.

“There is an artist in Turkey who says ‘yo soy flamenco.’ Not ‘I am Turkish’ or ‘I am an engineer,’ but ‘I am flamenco,’” Hayes said. “It’s their way of life, their culture, it has transformed into something like a nationality.”

Faculty Updates

Christina Bejarano, Associate Professor of Political Science. Bejarano published her new book, “The Latino Gender Gap in U.S. Politics.” Routledge released the book in December as part of its Routledge Research in American Politics and Governance series. In the book, she argues how the parties handle outreach to minority women, particularly Latina voters, could determine the future of U.S. politics — especially with Latino voters having a rapidly growing influence on the American political landscape. She studied national public opinion and focus group data sets to examine political attitudes among Latino voters — both immigrants and natural-born citizens. Within the partisan gap, Latina voters have been more supportive of Democratic candidates than men, but there’s a lesson for both parties. For example, newer immigrants are less likely to identify with a political party.

Peter Haney, Assistant Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies – Haney published the chapter “Capitán, ¿A qué huelen las sangre? Mexican/o Vaudeville during World War II and the Embodiment of Militarized Citizenship.” In Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez and Benjamin V. Olguín, Eds. *U.S. Latinos/os and World War II: Mobility, Agency, and Ideology*. Austin: University of Texas Press. The volume represents the first book-length study of Latina/o experiences in World War II over a wide spectrum of identities and ancestries—from Cuban American, Spanish American, and Mexican American segments to the under-studied Afro-Latino experience—Latina/os and World War II probes the controversial aspects of Latina/o soldiering and citizenship in the war, the repercussions of which defined the West during the twentieth century.

Jorge Pérez, Associate Professor of Spanish — Pérez was recently named a 2014 University of Kansas Man of Merit. Each year, the Emily Taylor Center for Women & Gender Equality recognizes the KU men who redefine masculinity by challenging norms, taking action, and leading by example while making outstanding achievements and contributions to KU and/or the Lawrence community. The program aims to increase awareness of the importance of education and involvement in men’s lives, inspire campus men to take an active role in their college experience and provide role models and mentors for men to be successful.

Kimber Richter, Professor of Preventative Medicine and Public Health, KUMC – Richter recently supervised the development of 10 archived webinars to help Federally Qualified Health Centers and Safety Net Clinics to improve the quality of their Tobacco and Obesity Services. This was part of a series of modules created for Kansas Federally Qualified Health Centers and Safety Net Clinics, in collaboration with the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved.
Facility Updates Continued

(KAMU) to standardize the approach used to educate health staff about the issues their patients face. Safety Net clinics are a network of clinics across Kansas with a mission to assure access to comprehensive health care for underserved populations, regardless of their ability to pay.

Clifton Pye, Associate Professor of Linguistics - Pye published "A Tale of Two Mam Children: Contact Induced Language Change in Mayan Children" in the *International Journal of American Linguistics* 79(4).

Stuart Day, Chair and Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese – Day published an edited volume with Palgrave Macmillan Press entitled *Mexican Public Intellectuals* with collaborator Debra Castillo. In Mexico, the participation of intellectuals in public life has always been extraordinary, and for many the price can be high. However, there has yet to be a book that focuses these influential individuals with the goal of outlining their roles in present-day Mexico. Highlighting prominent figures such as Enrique Krauze, Elena Poniatowska and Guadalupe Loaeza that have made incursions into issues such as elections, human rights, foreign policy, and the drug war, Mexican Public Intellectuals paints a picture of the ever-changing context of Mexican intellectualism.

Rubén Flores, Assistant Professor of American Studies – Flores published *Backroads Pragmatists: Mexico's Melting Pot and Civil Rights in the United States*. Through deep archival research and synthesis, Flores discusses how nationalism-building in postrevolutionary Mexico unmistakably influenced the civil rights movement and democratic politics in the United States. Flores argues that in molding Mexico’s ambitious social experiment, postrevolutionary reformers adopted pragmatism from John Dewey and cultural relativism from Franz Boas, which, in turn, profoundly shaped some of the critical intellectual figures in the Mexican American civil rights movement. The Americans Flores follows studied Mexico’s integration theories and applied them to America’s own problem, holding Mexico up as a model of cultural fusion. Flores shows the American reformers made the American West their laboratory in endeavors that the rural education campaigns that psychologist Loyd Tremain adapted from the Mexican ministry of education, and anthropologist Ralph L. Beals’s use of applied Mexican anthropology in the U.S. federal courts to transform segregation policy in southern California.

James Moreno, Assistant Professor of Dance – Moreno and collaborator Benjamin Rosenthal, Assistant Professor of Visual Art, Expanded Media, created an innovative performance piece that interwines contemporary dance with video art. The 12-minute piece, titled “human,” next premiered at the Lied Center last semester before being performed in New York City through The CURRENT SESSIONS. The CURRENT SESSIONS is a dance organization and presenting series that showcases innovative contemporary performances from up-and-coming and mid-career choreographers in biannual performances. Four KU students travelled with the pair to New York to perform the piece. The performance in New York City is the first phase of a four-part piece that will ultimately come together as an evening-length work.

Jill Kuhnheim, Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Professor of Spanish – Kuhnheim has a new book out on University of Arizona Press. Entitled *Beyond the Page*, the book examines poetry and performance in Spanish America over time and includes noteworthy poets and artists such as José Martí, Luis Palés Matos, Eusebia Cosme, Nicomedes Santa Cruz, Pablo Neruda, César Vallejo, and Nicolás Guillén, as well as very recent artists whose performance work is not as well known. "Offering fresh historical material and analysis, the author illuminates the relationship between popular and elite cultural activity in Spanish America and reshapes our awareness of the cultural work poetry has done in the past and may do in the future, particularly given the wide array of technological possibilities."

Gary Reich, Associate Professor of Political Science - Reich, together with collaborator Pedro dos Santos, Assistant Professor at Luther College and KU alumnus, published "The Rise (and Frequent Fall) of Evangelical Politicians: Organization, Theology, and Church Politics" in *Latin American Politics and Society* 55(4).
This Spring Break the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Kansas collaborated with Johnson County Community College to host a 3-day Spanish Immersion Retreat for regional teachers. Since many Spanish teachers in Kansas cannot spend time out of the country, they embrace an opportunity to renew their language skills in a language-intensive weekend. This is the second time in this NRC grant cycle we’ve been able to do this and we appreciate the Department offered support. At this weekend retreat we had 24 participants and 4 guests, with 12 being secondary school teachers, 3 primary, 3 middle school, and 7 from Johnson County Community College.

The retreat took place from March 14-16 at the Heartland Retreat Center outside of Kansas City. Participants paid a nominal registration fee which included five meals, two nights lodging and all activities at the Heartland. We invited participants to spend the weekend speaking Spanish with their colleagues and our Center collaborated with JCCC to put together some cultural events for the occasion as well as using the opportunity to talk about our resources. Participants arrived on Friday and, after checking in, enjoyed an evening of dinner, icebreakers, an outdoor fire, and mariachi music. Saturday was a full day of programming including presentations and activities such as: the history of the Spanish language; trivia and games; a film screening and discussion; reading and analysis of short stories, essays, and articles by various Spanish-speaking writers; listening to music and podcasts on MP3 players while enjoying the outdoors; a presentation on Paraguayan Tereré drinking, and an overview of teaching and outreach resources from the Center including our on-line materials and cultural trunks. The retreat wrapped up on Sunday with grammar and vocabulary questions, teaching tips, and evaluations.

Participant evaluations reported that they felt re-energized after the retreat and that they learned a remarkable amount. “I want to say thank you for the opportunity to attend the Spanish Immersion Weekend. It was well-planned and the facilities were excellent. It was really helpful for me to be surrounded by Spanish-speaking professionals. They brought all kinds of educational ideas for expanding my Spanish as well as the Spanish of my students... In teaching Kindergarten through 5th grade Spanish, it can be challenging to speak only Spanish. After the retreat, my facility with Spanish had improved greatly, as well as my confidence to make explanations without reverting to English” said Kelly McDermott, a K-5 Spanish teacher at Sunrise Point Elementary School in Overland Park.

Participants also enjoyed the comfortable setting, relating informally to others in Spanish and all the conversations, about teaching and life in general, that were carried on throughout the weekend. Sonsoles López, a Spanish teacher from Northwest Kansas, summed up her experience. “I had a great time meeting other Spanish teachers. I teach in Logan, a small rural town and it was great for me to go, learn, enjoy the mariachis, the conferences, the food and comfortable place. The speakers were really nice, fun and also had plenty of knowledge” she said.
2014 Award Recipients and Graduates

FLAS
Academic Year 2014-2015 Graduates
Rachel Denney
Laura Hales
Lacey Koester
Ginett Pineda

Academic Year 2014-2015 Undergraduates
Meaghan Palmer
Thomas Robinson

Summer 2014
Marisela Chávez-Narváez
Rachel Denney
Lauren Darnell
LaToya Hinton
Josephine Kapicka
Lacey Koester

Stansifer
Meghan Webb

Tinker Field Research Grants
Jennifer Abercrombie
Marisela Chávez-Narváez
David Dalton
Ryan Daugherty
Jeff Hill
Josephine Kapicka
Nicholas Kotinski
Adam Newhard
Ginett Pineda
Courtney Sánchez
Ximena Sevilla
Claire Wolnisty

Anita Herzfeld Award
Meaghan Palmer
Claire Maclachlan

Undergraduate Majors
Fall 2013
Emily Carpenter
Robert “Nick” Johnson
Zachary O’Bea
Gena Pollack

Spring 2014
Grant Bering
Ted Pommerenke
Shelby Stewart

Undergraduate Minors
Fall 2013
Devin Gerling
Garrett Page

Spring 2014
Jennifer Rosacker
Bailey Scott
Kaylee Sextro

Graduate Majors
Summer 2014
Diana Restrepo-Osorio
Lisa Vachalek

Congratulations to all our Students!

During her time in the Latin American & Caribbean Studies undergraduate program, Jennifer Rosacker was able to spend time in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. This photo shows Jennifer enjoying the beauty of Costa Rica.

Merienda Brown-Bag
Lectures

The Center’s Merienda lectures, which were held on the first Thursday of each month during the Spring 2014 semester, provide an opportunity for invited students, faculty, community members and visiting scholars to share their experiences and research in Latin America. The speakers represent a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds. Presentations typically last 40-45 minutes and allow for audience questions at the end. A simple lunch of rice and beans is served. Meriendas take place in Bailey Hall, Room 318 from 12:00-1:00pm.

We would like to thank all of the Spring 2014 Merienda presenters listed below. Please visit the Merienda website under the News & Events section on the CLACS website for more information and event photos.

Thank you:

February 6
Elizabeth Kronk Warner
"The Impacts of Climate Change on Indigenous Peoples in Latin America"

March 6
Jai Nitz
"Illegal Alien Icons: Comic Books and Culture."

April 3
Claire Wolnisty
"Austral Empires: Southern Migration to Central and South America, 1850-1877."

May 1
Rubén Flores
"Working in the AHSEP: Thoughts on Working in the National Archives of the Republic of Mexico."
The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies was fortunate to be a part of a number of interesting events on campus this Spring.

In January, the Human Migration Series, sponsored by the Department of Anthropology and CLACS, continued with a number of lectures related to Latin America. Core faculty members Bart Dean, John Hoopes and Brent Metz, as well as CLACS Assistant Director Peter Haney and Research Associate Kiran Jayaram participated in the lecture series.

In February, the Center partnered with the Department of Foreign Languages at Johnson County Community College to host a Central American Film Showcase. Over two weeks, four films, Gestation, Las Cruces...Next village, Anita, the Insect Hunter and La Yuma, were screened at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art at JCCC. We were particularly fortunate that Hispano Durón, PhD candidate in Film and Media Studies at KU and director of Anita, the Insect Hunter, was able to attend the screening of his film and lead a discussion following the film.

The CLACS Graduate Research Symposium was the highlight of March. Latin Americanist graduate students from a number of disciplines met for a conference-style set up of three topical panels, each with a faculty commentator. This symposium was designed to allow graduate students to share their research and get a feel for the ways in which research is disseminated.

CLACS was fortunate to work with Luciano Tosta, Assistant Professor of Portuguese, to bring two Brazilian scholars to campus. In March, Pedro Meira Monteiro of Princeton University spoke about Brazilian "jongos" and the shift from folklore to cultural history in Brazil. In April, Maxine Margolis, Professor Emerita at University of Florida, focused her talk on the question "What does it Mean to be Brazilian?"

A number of events were on tap for April. María Lourdes Cortés, a Central American film historian, visited campus and spoke about her book, Los amores contrariados. García Márquez y el cine. We also welcomed Jacques Jovin of the State University of Haiti to campus for a lecture and reception as part of the inauguration of the KU-Haiti partnership, based on a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation Institutional Development Grant awarded for 2014-2018.

April was also a busy month for our outreach team. Our outreach coordinator, Danika Swanson, participated in a panel discussion about etiquette in Latin America as part of the KU Annual Etiquette Dinner. She also worked with outreach coordinators from other ethnic studies centers to put together an educator workshop titled “Children of Conflict, Children of Peace.” The workshop featured lectures and a panel discussion in the morning, followed by interactive session in the afternoon, including a human trafficking simulation experience, a case study and conflict resolution and mediation skills lab.

Latin America and Diasporas: Hall Center Seminar Renewed, Renamed

Next year’s Hall Center for the Humanities Seminar has been renamed to reflect a widened scope for interdisciplinary exchange. The directors will again be Jill Kuhnheim and Tony Rosenthal and they have moved the meeting date for the seminar to the fourth Monday of the month, from 3:30 to 5 pm. The theme for the first year of the three-year cycle will be “Violence, Public Health, and Poverty.” The fall schedule has been set and will feature the following presenters:

- August 25: David K. Johnson, Psychology and Gerontology
- September 22: Kimber Richter, Preventive Medicine and Public Health
- October 27: Donna Goldstein, Anthropology, University of Colorado
- November 24: Melissa Birch, School of Business

Paper titles are still being finalized and will be announced soon in the Hall Center Communique and on their website. As usual, papers will be available in advance and most of the session will be devoted to discussion. The spring schedule is still open. The themes for the second and third years of the seminar are “Diasporas and Migration” and “Landscapes of the Interior,” respectively. In addition, there will be a mini-conference during the second year. The directors welcome suggestions for visiting scholars in the region who would present on these topics and they encourage the attendance of graduate students and faculty from all fields in order to create lively discussions.
Diana Restrepo-Osorio, MA student in Latin American and Caribbean Studies – Restrepo-Osorio presented her research to legislators and the general public at the Master’s Research day at the Capitol in Topeka. Her project, “Defining Perceptions on Watershed Management in a Midwestern Watershed, U.S.A.,” is a study of how to approach farmers, residents and state officials with the implementation of best management practices for reducing sources of pollution in watersheds that negatively impact public drinking water.

Ana María Hernández-Candelas, DMA student in School of Music – Hernández-Candelas performed her second of three required doctoral level recitals. She performed the Concierto Borikén by Puerto Rican composer Ernesto Cordero. This concierto was premiered in Puerto Rico and her performance represented its Kansas premiere. Also performed were Jolivet’s Chant de Linos, Honami by Wil Offermans and Leclair’s Sonata in e minor. She recently released a CD of Puerto Rican flute music titled Flauta Boricua.

George Klaeren, PhD candidate in History – Klaeren received the Andrew Debicki International Travel Award from the Hall Center for the Humanities to conduct research for his dissertation, “Rational Inquisitors: Medical Discourse, Empiricism, and Catholic Epistemology in the Eighteenth-Century Iberian Atlantic,” in Madrid. Klaeren will visit the Archivo Histórico Nacional and the Biblioteca Nacional de España to investigate how medical discourse and empiricism shaped new standards of proof and truth in the Spanish Catholic Church during the 18th century. In addition to his study of Spain, Klaeren has a sub-focus on colonial Latin America.

Juan Urbano, PhD Candidate in Political Science – Urbano defended his dissertation, “Hispanic Growth in Rural America: Public Policy & Attitudes Towards Immigrants.” Urbano graduates in May.

Megan Farley Webb, PhD candidate in Anthropology – In October 2013 Meghan won a Wenner-Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant to fund 5 months of dissertation research. Meghan’s dissertation examines the impacts of migration of Kaqchikel Maya men on their family members who remain in home communities in rural Guatemala. She is particularly interested in how migration changes gender and family dynamics in these communities. Webb was selected as the 2014 recipient of the Stansifer Award.

Javier Barroso, PhD candidate in Spanish – Barroso received the 2014 Chancellor’s Graduate Teaching Assistant Award. The award is given to recognize excellence in teaching and is awarded to students who have demonstrated outstanding professional interaction with students and faculty during their tenure as GTAs. Barroso also published “Javier Sicilia: Public Mourning for the Sons of Mexico.” in Mexican Public Intellectuals. Ed. Stuart Day and Debra Castillo. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 215-233.


Jacob Rapp, PhD candidate in Spanish - Rapp hosted “Interdisciplinary Approaches to Literature and Literary Approaches to Interdisciplinarity,” as part of the Hall Center Interdisciplinary Graduate Research Workshop. Drawing on his interest in literary theory and his dissertation research on Mexican fiction, in his presentation Rapp showed how contemporary studies of nationalism, economics, and computer science yield new insights from well-known literary texts, and at the same time how literature has contributed to new conceptions of gender norms, memory, and human rights.

Graduate Student Spotlight:
Marisela Chávez–Narváez
MA student in Latin American & Caribbean Studies

Marisela Chávez-Narváez moved to Lawrence last fall to begin the MA program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. A native of San Fernando Valley, CA, she attended the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Through this institution she participated in two study abroad programs. She spent a semester in Argentina studying the geographical and cultural landscape, and another in Costa Rica studying environmental policy and health. These experiences allowed her to gain an understanding of the relationships between people and their natural environments, as well as the role that government can have in shaping these. Marisela completed her undergraduate studies in Spanish in 2012. She minored in Global Studies and received a certificate in Latin American & Caribbean Studies.

At KU, she hopes to continue exploring human-environmental relationships in Latin America through an interdisciplinary perspective. This summer she will begin her thesis research and participate in a FLAS sponsored study abroad program to study Portuguese and Brazilian Culture in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil.
As warm breezes finally banish the last remnants of a particularly fierce winter, we at the Center are getting ready to say goodbye to yet another cohort of graduates. LACS majors Grant Berning, Ted Pommerenke, and Shelby Stewart will be picking up and moving on, some further than others. Grant, for his part, tells us that he will begin the graduate program in anthropology here at KU in the fall. Several LACS minors are also graduating, among them Jennifer Rosacker, Bailey Scott and Kaylee Sextro.

This Fall, our undergraduate FLAS fellows Gus Bova and Cassie Osei will return from sojourns in South America to finish their degrees in Latin American Studies. Gus has been in Ecuador studying Quichua at the Pontifica Universidad Católica del Ecuador, while Cassie has spent the Spring studying Portuguese with CIEE’s program in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil. Kate Sopcich, meanwhile, has postponed a planned trip to Chile until the summer. She plans to remain in Chile for an academic semester that does not fully overlap with ours, returning to Lawrence in Spring 2015.

In alumni news, Zachary O’Bea (2013) is now working at Cerner Corporation in Kansas City. He accepted the position just before graduating this past December. Please send us the news from your end!

LACS Alumna Faces Brain Tumor

Staff of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies were saddened to learn that Noemí Martínez (‘13) recently underwent surgery for a brain tumor.

Noemí graduated from KU in December 2013 after completing a double major in Spanish and Latin American Studies and spending the summer in Brazil on a FLAS fellowship. She received departmental honors from Latin American Studies as is known to her professors as a serious, motivated, and thoughtful student who returned to college at middle age and distinguished herself academically while raising her children.

Noemí is currently recuperating in Lawrence with her family, and the Center is happy to accept messages from alumni and others who know her from her time at KU.
by Gregory Cushman

During the academic year 2013-14, KU’s Center for Latin American Studies Title VI grant supported a research cluster focused on Early Modern Globalizations in the Iberian World.

Core faculty organized four interdisciplinary colloquia, each with a specific theme. The first event had 37 faculty and graduate students in attendance, and around 30 attended each subsequent session. It concluded with a conference: “Ideology versus Practice in the Early Modern Iberian World” (Feb. 27-28), which represented both a culmination and second punto de embarque for this group, as it seeks to bring visibility to KU’s extensive resources, faculty, and graduate programs in history, literature, and cultural studies of regions and peoples touched by Spanish and Portuguese colonialism.

The first session early in the fall semester provided an introduction to the research theme and immediately identified a point of analytical tension: When is it most useful to think in terms of a single Iberian World or a multitude of Iberian Worlds? Discussion emphasized dilemmas of periodization and the necessity to recognize differences between our conceptions of an Iberian World and forms of consciousness that would have been meaningful to those living in the past.

The second session surveyed religiosity in the Iberian World.

The third session on “the natural and moral history of the early modern Iberian World” placed the environment and science at the center of discussion.

The fourth session reflected on identities and subjectivities.

The final conference involved ten invited speakers and a range of KU faculty and graduate students. It started with a reception and exhibit at the Spencer Research Library featuring a selection of treasures from the library’s collection. The next day at the Commons, three sessions explored themes central to understanding the nature and significance of the Early Modern Iberian World. The first session explored the Habsburg Empire’s engagement with the world; Stephanie Stillo (KU) traced the ways in which visual portrayals of imperial cities generated “a visually unified empire” for Spain. Natalia Silva Prada (Library of Congress) explored the propagandistic and subversive function of prophetic discourses on both sides of the Atlantic. Mariselle Meléndez (Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) used the urban geography of Cartagena to examine the contested meanings of foreignness.

The second conference session explored the construction of subjectivities. Patrick O’Banion (Lindenwood Univ.) demonstrated enduring connections between the Iberian and Islamic worlds by following the daily lives of moriscos and crypto-Muslims in sixteenth-century Spain. Luis Fernando Restrepo (Univ. of Arkansas) used the career of a prominent Jesuit missionary to the African slaves of Cartagena to forcefully argue that the “globalization of compassion” had deep historical roots in the Iberian world—long before the takeoff of the Anglo abolitionist movement. Louise Cole (Univ. of Arkansas) examined the place of Jesuits in Portuguese “soft colonialism” and cultural interactions in Japan. Kathryn McKnight (Univ. of New Mexico) focused on the Inquisition’s treatment of a famous Afro-colonial woman accused of witchcraft, again in Cartagena.

The third conference session focused on material history. John Schwaller (SUNY-Albany) asserted the importance of trans-Pacific trade with the New World by following viceroy Luis de Velasco from New Spain to Peru, and an embassy of samurai passing through Mexico en route to Madrid. Hugh Cagle (Univ. of Utah) traced the origins of interest in a medicinal plant back to Portuguese outposts in sixteenth-century Africa to recall a time when outsiders viewed the region as an earthly paradise and source of healing, rather than a land of sickness and death. Kris Lane (Tulane Univ.) traced the conditions and consequences of the great Potosí mint fraud of 1649 to argue that silver lay at the heart of the global crisis of the seventeenth century. I chaired a final conversation on the parameters and prospects of interdisciplinary scholarship on the early modern Iberian World. Participants agreed that the Iberian World framework is fraught with tensions involving colony and empire, singularity and pluralism, ideology and practice, but is rich with possibilities as an alternative to other modes of Atlantic, imperial, and global history.
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Through donations, students are able to travel to Latin America to complete pioneering research on interdisciplinary subjects.

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In honor of Anita Herzfeld: Donations help to build a fund which will help sponsor undergraduate students who wish to study abroad.

If you wish to send a donation by mail, please contact us at:

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Thank you for your support!