



OAXACA CITY, OAXACA, MEXICO

PHOTO: ALANA RODRIGUEZ

MESSAGE FROM THE CENTER

By Victoria Langland and Alana Rodriguez

The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies welcomes you back to campus, whether you will be connecting with us virtually or in person. After a summer unlike any other, we know this new year comes with many challenges as we adapt our classes, research, scholarship, and outreach to a mostly virtual format. We recognize that many members of our academic community found their summer plans upended, but we also celebrate the creative projects and collaborations that were able to continue in a safe and distanced manner. In the new academic year, we look forward to offering exciting programming and funding opportunities that adapt to current events and circumstances. We hope to "see" you all soon!



BLACK LIVES MATTER - AS VIDAS NEGRAS IMPORTAM - LAS VIDAS NEGRAS IMPORTAN

A statement to our community

The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and the Brazil Initiative are acutely aware that our community is hurting after a painful summer of reckoning on topics of racial injustice and violence, and that this pain is felt especially deeply by our Black, Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latinx, and Afro-Indigenous faculty, staff, and students. Our Center shares in the deep emotions our community is feeling and stands in solidarity and empathy with you.

We understand that these feelings are not exclusive to those located in the United States, as across the Americas our shared histories of slavery, colonialism and racial discrimination resulted in similar structures of systematized racism and its manifestation in state violence. Throughout the region, Afro-descendant, indigenous and immigrant populations are those most affected by the ongoing global pandemic, while in many areas, such as Brazil, police deaths of black youths continue to devastate families, communities, and nations. Thus, as we lament the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, we also lament that of João Pedro Mattos in Rio de Janeiro, and the tragically long list of those who came before them.

LACS is committed to the ongoing work of anti-racist struggles that seek to end this violence against Black bodies in our interconnected societies, and we acknowledge and respect the rights of those who participate in public protest. We know this is a time of uncertainty, confusion, discomfort, and sadness. We know too that we are not all equally affected by structural racism and thus our responses and reactions to injustice look different right now. What is certain is that we all share a responsibility to create positive change and to engage in a process of listening to, learning from, and amplifying Black voices.

Our team

VICTORIA LANGLAND

Director, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Brazil Initiative Associate Professor of History, Associate Professor of Portuguese

ALANA RODRIGUEZ

Academic Program Manager, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies

BEBETE MARTINS

Program Manager, Brazil Initiative

TIMOTHY W. LOREK

Community Outreach Coordinator, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies

GLORIA CAUDILL

Global South Cluster Manager

KATHY COVERT

Global South Cluster Officer Coordinator



Student assistants

KATHLEEN ORTIZ-TENESACA

Communications Major, Business Administration Minor

NICHOLAS FARRUGIA

Microbiology Major, Art & Design Minor

AVERY SANDSTRUM

Comparative Literature & International Studies Major



Meet the Iranslators!

This summer, two U-M Graduate Students joined our team to translate lesson plans created through our U-M/University of Puerto Rico Outreach Collaboration from English to Spanish (see pg. 28).

JENNIFER SIERRA

Jennifer is a PhD Candidate in Linguistic Anthropology. Her research examines how the participation in new technologies of communication such as social media has impacted the linguistic and overall communicative practices of Shipibo-Konibos—an indigenous Amazonian society. She first became familiar with this indigenous community when she visited the urban town of Pucallpa in the Peruvian Amazon for a study abroad program in 2015. During this visit she helped document seven different indigenous languages in an initiative organized by the Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru. Jennifer received her bachelor's degree in Linguistics and Anthropology from the University of Florida. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Jennifer suspended her research abroad and instead is focusing on conducting online research while in the US. She is also currently collaborating with the small Amazonian NGO Alianza Arkana and the Shipibo radio programme Axenon Ikanwe. She is helping them write grants to obtain funds during these times of hardship and translating documents and social media posts from Spanish to English. Jennifer likes to spend her free time watching films, going for walks and videocalling her family back home in Colombia. She especially enjoys talking to her two-year old nephew.

JAVIER DE JESÚS ASTACIO

Javier de Jesús provides translating support to the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. He was born and raised in Puerto Rico where he received his BS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez. His work experiences and engineering coursework have inspired him to seek further education in the fields of robotics, mechatronics, and biomechanics. Therefore, he will conduct his MS in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Outside the academic environment, Javier developed a strong passion for 3D printing and enjoys creating designs for his own use or for the robotics' team. Javier enjoys spending time with his family and friends and loves to travel and road trips. In addition, he enjoys outdoor activities such as going to the beach, hiking and biking.



Fellowships & Grants

LACS Awards \$30,000 in Tinker Foundation Field Research Grants to graduate students conducting preliminary research in Latin America

The Tinker Foundation's Field Research Grants Program is designed to provide graduate-level students across all academic disciplines and graduate degree programs the opportunity to conduct field research in Latin America. LACS is fortunate to have received a \$15,000 grant from the Tinker Foundation with \$15,000 in matching funds from the International Institute and the Rackham Graduate School for the 2020 cycle. While travel restrictions have postponed this year's projects, we are pleased to have awarded the following students:



Ian Beggen, Ph.D. Anthropology, Peru: Investigating Early Human Occupations in the Lake Titicaca Basin

Matthew Brown, Ph.D. Anthropology, Peru: Collapse and Migration of an Early Society in Highland Peru

Sergio Cardenas, Ph.D. Romance Languages and Literatures - Spanish, Mexico: Carlos Contreras' Aerial Photography and the Urban Remapping of Chile. A Micro-archive of the Cultural Mexico City

Eimeel Carolina Castillo Dona, Ph.D. Women's Studies, Nicaragua: Femininities and Masculinities in Occupied Nicaragua (1912-1933)

Paloma Contreras, Ph.D. Anthropology, Mexico: Water insecurity and stress biomarkers in Mexico City

Siria Gamez, MS Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Mexico: Cats in the Canopy: Vertical Niche Partitioning in Neotropical Felids

Sarah Katz, Ph.D. Earth and Environmental Sciences, Peru: Exploring mountain water cycles and climate at Lake American Highway and the Imaginary of Junín, central Peru

Daniela Lopez, MSW Social Work, Chile: Exploration of Culturally & Linguistically Tailored Approaches

Andrea Mora, Ph.D. School of Social Work and Developmental Psychology, Mexico: Fortaleza Mexicana: Families Confronting Violence in Rural Mexico

Melissa Painter, Ph.D. Psychology, Costa Rica: Factors influencing white-faced capuchin monkey vocalizations

Rudy Pradenas, Ph.D. Romance Languages and Literature, Chile: Revolt in Residues

Iris Saraeny Rivera Salinas, Ph.D. SEAS - Resource Ecology Management, Mexico: The Role of Trait Mediated Indirect Interactions in coffee agroecosystems

Andrea Sosa Moreno, Ph.D. Epidemiology, Ecuador: Effect of intermittent water supply on water quality and water consumption

Chenyang Su, MS Conservation Ecology, Mexico: Impact of plant species diversity on coffee plant in agroforestry

Dicle Taskin, Ph.D. Architecture, Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico: The Pan-Hemispheric Integration

Rodrigo Tinoco Figueroa, Ph.D. Earth and Environmental Sciences, Brazil: The hidden history of early fish evolution in South America

Daniel Varela, Ph.D. Anthropology and History, Colombia: Family and mining property among African-Colombian people (1870-1930)

Joseph Wardle, Ph.D. Anthropology, Mexico: The Transition from Hunting and Gathering to Farming Villages in

Kerry White, Ph.D. American Culture, Cuba: Trans Cuba

Astrid Zamora, Ph.D. Nutritional Sciences, Mexico: Drivers of sleep health among perimenopausal working-class Mexican women





PHOTO: LUCAS KOUTSOUKOS CHALHOUB, 2019 TINKER FRG RECIPIENT

Fellowships & Grants, cont.

LACS receives Tinker Field Research Collaborative Grant, securing \$150,000 in graduate student research funds over the next five years.

It is an incredible honor to announce that LACS was selected to participate as an inaugural member of the Tinker Field Research Collaborative, securing funding for graduate students doing preliminary fieldwork in Latin America for the next five years! We are one of eleven Centers for Latin American Studies across the U.S. that will participate in this new program.

Since 1979, the Tinker Foundation has provided support to graduate students attending U.S. universities to conduct pre-dissertation, exploratory research in Latin America through its Field Research Grant (FRG) program. The FRGs, awarded to universities and administered by Centers for Latin American Studies, supported more than 9,000 recipients over its 40-year history. LACS has proudly received generous Tinker Foundation support through the FRG program for many years.

Following a comprehensive external evaluation of the program in 2019, The Tinker Foundation launched an enhanced program that seeks to deepen the impact of the field research experience for students and create a learning community of Centers.

The new program, the Tinker Field Research Collaborative, provides five years of support to selected Centers. Through the Collaborative, Tinker will not only fund student field research but also promote opportunities for joint experimentation, tool-building, and knowledge exchange on the institutional level. This may include pre-departure support to students, resources to encourage responsible practices in field research, networking of current and former FRG recipients, and approaches for monitoring, evaluation, and program improvement. In addition, members of the Collaborative commit to supporting graduate students for whom field research would not otherwise be possible.

LACS received \$15,000/year from the Tinker Foundation, along with generous matching funds from the International Institute and the Rackham Graduate School. This is a total of \$30,000/year or \$150,000 over the five-year grant period dedicated to graduate student research.

Marisol Fila receives 2020 - 2021 LACS Alfredo D. & Luz María P. Gutiérrez Dissertation Award



Marisol Fila is the recipient of the LACS Alfredo D. & Luz María P. Gutiérrez Dissertation Award for her dissertation titled, "Content and Form:

Twenty-First Century Black Press and Articulations of Blackness in Buenos Aires, São Paulo and Lisbon". The \$16,000 award \$16,000 supports dissertation write-up. After a thorough review of an

unprecedented number of proposals, the LACS selection committee is pleased to recognize the high quality of Fila's scholarly work.

Student Spotlights

Meet students in the LACS Graduate Certificate program!

Paloma Contreras

PhD ANTHROPOLOGY

I study the impact of water insecurity on working class women from Mexico City, using endocrine and epigenetic markers of stress. The LACS certificate allowed me to create more connections with scholars doing research in Latin America. I also wanted to situate my own studies on subjects such as political ecology and decolonial studies in the specific context of Latin America and the Caribbean in general, and Mexico in particular.

Over the summer of 2020, I worked on my prospectus defense, on my project design, and I also learned new tools to analyze my data. For the 2020-2021 academic year I plan to write and submit grant applications to agencies such as the National Science Foundation, and hopefully soon I will be able travel to Mexico and collect the samples I need for my dissertation research!









Eimeel Carolina Castillo Dona

PhD HISTORY AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

My dissertation explores the influence of the U.S. military occupation in processes of formation of hegemonic models of gender identification in the early twentieth century Nicaragua. I am interested in looking at daily interactions between Nicaraguans and marines to illuminate how a society constructs what was a proper "man" or "woman."

I declared the LACS certificate because, through the Center's support for research and programming, the certificate provides wonderful opportunities for engaging in concrete research and academic debate in the field of LACS.

Summer 2020 was difficult because I had to change all my plans, including pre-dissertation fieldwork in Nicaragua, which was especially rough because I have not seen my family there for over a year now. I was fortunate to obtain a part-time position developing a course with Professor Sueann Caulfield and do editorial work while in Ann Arbor. Thanks to the Humanities Collaboratory, this Fall I'll be in Washington D.C. working remotely as a research assistant for a digital repository and hope to be collecting or reading archival materials in Nicaragua by Spring!

Miranda Garcia

PhD CANDIDATE: SOCIOCULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Interview and text by Nicholas Farrugia

Miranda Garcia is a doctoral student in U-M's anthropology department currently working on her dissertation: "Independent Advertising in Cuba: A Lens on Economic and Social Change." She has been the recipient of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies Tinker Field Research Grant and the International Institute Individual Fellowship, which funded ethnographic research trips to the island in 2018 and 2019.



Miranda graduated with honors from the University of Chicago in 2013 with a Bachelor's Degree in anthropology. Continuing with her studies, Miranda is currently pursuing a doctorate in anthropology from the University of Michigan, where she studies mass media, consumption, entrepreneurship, and identity in Cuba and its diaspora. Her work draws on ethnography, oral history, and semiotic analysis to explore topics ranging from collective memory in Little Havana nostalgia shops to her current project on Cuba's emerging advertising industry. Miranda is a Graduate Research Fellow with the National Science Foundation and a former fellow with the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies and Mellon Mays.

Dissertation Explained

When most people think of Cuba, the things that come to mind are Fidel Castro, cigars, colorful buildings, and cars from the past that inspire a sense of nostalgia. For Miranda Garcia, Cuba is a means to understand an island that has loomed large in her family and those of so many other Cuban-Americans. Growing up in Miami, Miranda was witness to the collective memories of Cuban exiles and their children, seeing firsthand the power of communally-crafted narratives and repeated imagery in sustaining a community and charting its evolution through various generations. This backdrop inspired Miranda to study new media in contemporary Cuba and its role in shaping identity, communal narratives, and socioeconomic relations. Miranda's research centers on informal advertising in Cuba, an industry which has flourished following the legalization of small-scale private enterprise in the last decade. Using her training in anthropology and critical theory, Miranda investigates advertisements and their reception, arenas she says nicely capture current discourses and debates in Cuba. Working with advertising producers and distributors also unveils new economic roles and relationships, as the industry represents new kinds of jobs and careers, particularly for many young Cubans.

"I see these new advertisements and the conversations that emerge around them as a lens on Cuba's slow shift away from a strictly centrally planned economy. Ads are not just selling products and services, but also ideals and imaginations as they project different visions of the Cuban consumer, entrepreneur, family...these ads thus become a key site for inhabiting and debating new subjectivities, socioeconomic relations, and ideas of future change."

An Evolving Media Landscape

In the popular imagination, commercial advertisements may seem antithetical to a country famous for its propaganda billboards and iconic revolutionary imagery. Miranda, however, sees them as part of a larger visual culture on the island.

"Cuba has an incredibly rich media history - from early Massaguer magazines and political cartoons, to lively ads in the 1950s, to colorful revolutionary propaganda posters, PSAs, and films. Today's commercial ads are a part of this long tradition and build on it in various ways."

Miranda notes how the media landscape has expanded exponentially with the advent of the internet and its offline Cuban work-arounds. Though public wifi hotspots became available in 2015, internet access in Cuba is still exceptionally expensive and out of reach for many Cubans. Creative solutions have enabled independent magazines, applications, and other homegrown media to circulate digitally in Cuba – a popular alternative to State-produced mass media and television. *El paquete* is perhaps the most successful and widespread, and has become one of the main vehicles for local advertisements.



Image: Government Propoganda - "The nation is made of the merits of its children"

El Paquete

'El paquete' or 'the package' is the fitting name for a collection of pirated movies, TV shows, digital publications, phone applications and more, distributed throughout Cuba via USBs and external hard drives. The idea is simple: Anyone in Cuba looking for foreign and domestic media can bring a USB drive to a local paquete provider and can buy the entire terabyte package, or specific folders with content stratified by genre. Every month or so, providers relying on national and trans-national contacts release a new package to designated distributors. Upon the release, these new movies, TV shows and other content, many dubbed over in Spanish, become available to the public. The paquete not only allowed Cubans to explore foreign pop culture, like Hollywood entertainment, but it also presented an opportunity to promote economic growth across the nation. In 2010, the Cuban government lifted restrictions on private business, giving citizens expanded opportunities to open their own personal care shops, speciality stores, and restaurants, but many of these new entrepreneurs were in desperate need of a way to advertise their new businesses to the public.

The *paquete* offered a unique opportunity for store-owners to tap into public advertisement while catering their message to specific audiences directly in their homes. Business owners began to pay to have their advertisements distributed in the *paquete*, airing between different TV shows, movies or downloaded YouTube videos. These advertisements in part fuel the informal advertising industry that is taking Cuba by storm.

New Voices

As an anthropologist, it is Miranda's job to develop a deep comprehension of people's lived experience. To research the informal advertising industry in Cuba to its fullest, Miranda tasked herself with studying individuals who are consumers of the *paquete*, and individuals who work on developing the advertisements in the *paquete*. These ethnographic studies allow Miranda to grasp the industry in a more holistic sense – understanding how businesses are portrayed and perceived, and how they envision themselves and their target audiences.

On the production side, the emerging marketing industry has laid the foundation for a new generation of creatives to work on their craft. Most of the advertisements seen in the *paquete* are made by small agencies or freelancers who moonlight outside official employment. Cuba and its economic reforms have produced a cohort of young creatives, including many talented graphic designers, filmmakers, video editors, and content creators who are finding new opportunities to employ their skills in the emerging advertising industry. Miranda notes how this is particularly significant for young Cubans, a demographic that is more likely to leave Cuba to find opportunities elsewhere than stay. The advertising and marketing space may prove to be a promising domestic alternative for younger generations.

These new forms of employment are accompanied by unique and sophisticated advertisements for local Cuban businesses. Today, new generations of Cubans have begun to disrupt the status quo by crafting individual style - a phenomenon which became a selling point for businesses. Miranda described an advertisement for a newly opened barber shop with the message aimed at defining the individual - a new hairstyle for a new, unique 'you'. Miranda adds that this messaging is not just targeted at consumers, but at small businesses themselves who aim to craft memorable, differentiating branding.

Racial, Geographic, and Economic Divisions

To understand how Cubans receive and respond to these types of advertisements, Miranda inquires across demographic groups, spanning income, racial, geographic boundaries. In doing so, Miranda has unearthed various social dynamics and tensions in the wake of economic reforms.



Image: Paquete Vendor - Printouts of movie posters, video games, and music albums on display

She explains, for instance, how many state workers don't feel as if the advertisements are geared towards them. Although public employees often have access to the paquete, minimum wage work (as low as \$16/month USD) provides little in the way of purchasing services from the private business' who advertise in the paquete. Thus, while many advertisements relay messages which seemingly attract all audiences, in reality they are seen as geared towards a specific customer - oftentimes the new entrepreneurial class or privately employed worker. Despite being implemented as a marketing maneuver, in effect these advertising choices point to economic disparities and may inadvertently deepen emerging divisions between socioeconomic classes in Cuba.

Closely tied to these economic cleavages are age-old racial inequalities. Despite having a very diverse population, much of Cuba's wealth is maintained by white or lighter-skinned Cubans. Given the substantial initial investment necessary to start a business, these individuals generally represent the demographic of private business owners in Cuba. When Miranda started to analyze each advertisement within the paquete and its producers, it became clear that Cuban advertising, though promising and innovative, also reflects existing structural inequalities.

Not only does Miranda examine how race and ethnicity might play a role in advertisements and beyond that, economic development, but she also explores geospatial influences. Cuba is a very Havana-centric country - the island capital has served as a political stronghold and economic epicenter for years, and Miranda believes it has an impact on business marketing. In her studies, Miranda explores how people from different regions, from rural small towns to cities across the island, respond to the advertisements.



Image: Customers purchasing El Paquete at a vendor

What Lies Ahead

The coronavirus has temporarily impacted Miranda's research, but she plans on returning to Cuba when travel restrictions are lifted. In the meantime, she is investigating transnational ties between Cuba and Miami, where parts of the paquete and some advertisements originate. She will also conduct archival research to provide historical context for new media, as well as in-depth analysis of over four terabytes of collected paquete content. With these objectives, Miranda will continue to dissect the complex social and economic intricacies of the informal advertising industry, and its radiating effects on Cuba's rapidly changing society.



The LACS Graduation Ceremony took place virtually on May 1, 2020





LACS Graduate Certificate



Amelia Frank-Vitale

"I am finishing my doctorate in anthropology; I study migration, deportation, and violence in Honduras. I conducted fieldwork in Honduras from 2017-2019, and I was with the 2018 "caravan" as part of my research. I published opeds in the Washington Post, Fortune Magazine, and Latino Rebels. I published crónicas in English in NACLA and the World Policy Journal, and in Spanish in Contra Corriente. My research was funded by the Inter-American Foundation, The Social Science Research Council, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and the Fulbright. Starting this fall, I will have the ACLS/Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowship to support my final year of doctoral work."

Major in Latin American and Caribbean Studies

Christina Capodanno

Christina graduated with a double major in Comparative Literature and Latin American and Caribbean Studies.



Jacqueline Cope



"At the University of Michigan, I was a volunteer coordinator for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center, worked in the Museum of Anthropological Archaeology, and completed an honors thesis on eighteenth-century administrative reforms on mercury production in Peru. I studied history and Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and minored in Education for Empowerment."

"I am graduating as a senior pursuing a triple degree in International Studies, Latin American & Caribbean Studies, and Spanish. I am finishing my PICS honors thesis on women's collective action in Argentina. My junior year of college I had the opportunity to study abroad in my hometown of Buenos Aires, Argentina, where I interned for Amnesty International. Next year, I will be starting as a corporate paralegal at Cleary Gottlieb law firm in New York City with a focus on Latin American markets."

Josefina Scriven



Minor in Latin American and Caribbean Studies

Soverno Chen Soverno completed a Bachelor of Science degree with majors in Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience; Evolutionary Anthropology; and Microbiology, in addition to her minor in LACS!

> "I got the chance to study abroad summer 2018 in the Dominican Republic. It was my first time studying public health and the experience was eyeopening. I enjoyed speaking Spanish to the locals and learning about many prevalent health issues. Thanks to this amazing experience, I will be pursuing a MPH in UM's School of Public Health starting Fall 2020!"

Ella Horwedel



"During my time at U of M, I had many opportunities to explore far beyond the borders of my comfort zone. I studied abroad multiple times, allowing me to experience and live in beautiful countries such as Cuba, Peru, Spain, Morocco, Greece, Bulgaria, and the UK. engaged in numerous volunteer programs dedicated to ESL teaching in

undocumented communities, further cementing my passion for education. I interned as a law clerk at the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC), further solidifying my interests in social work and immigration reform. My time at U of M was incredibly valuable, for it not only allowed me to pursue my personal and academic interests, but it also provided a breadth of resources and opportunities. As a passionate student with degrees in English and Spanish, and minors in Social Work and Latin American and Caribbean Studies, I was honored to receive the RLL Student Achievement Award. After graduation, I will be pursuing my master's and certification in Secondary Education from the University of Michigan, where I received the School of Education Excellence Award."

Reannon Robinson

Reannon majored in **Economics** and minored in LACS. "Throughout my time at Michigan,



I was the two-time winner of the Nancy Bausch **Thomas** scholarship for **Economics** students, completed internships the United States and Argentina, and studied abroad twice in Argentina and Palestine. After graduation, I will be starting my career as a Mortgage Banker at Ouicken Loans."

Michael Russo majored in History and Spanish with a minor in LACS. Michael was an active member of PALMA, a student organization that offers Englishlanguage tutoring services to the Ann Arbor Latinx community. Michael deepened his commitment to immigrants' rights advocacy with the U-M Immigrant Justice Lab, researching and composing asylum petitions on behalf of migrants detained in Michigan and facing deportation. His History honors thesis examines how US foreign policy in Central America affects human rights and migration. Michael took language courses in Portuguese, Catalan, and Persian. Michael will be the Václav Havel Human Rights Fellow at Perseus Strategies, a public interest international human rights law firm in Washington, D.C.

Michael Russo

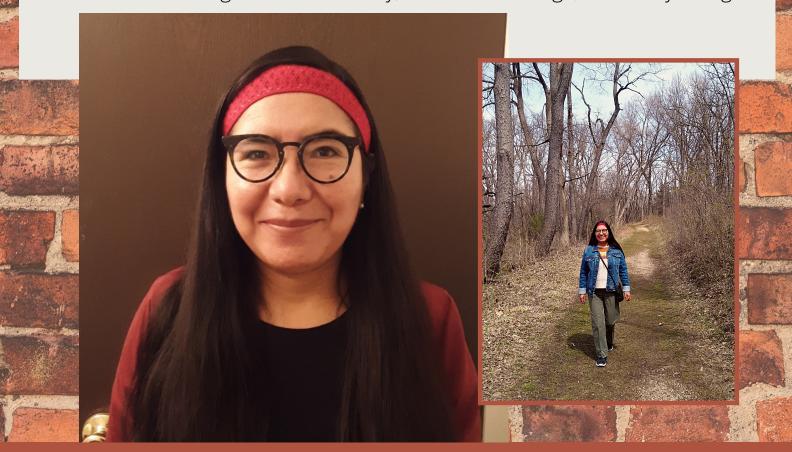


Meet the faculty

Adela Carlos Rios

Quechua Language Lecturer II

Adela was born in the rural community of Ch'isikata of the Yauri-Espinar Province in the Cusco region of Peru, grazing llamas with her family. Adela received a Bachelor's degree in Education with a concentration in Biology and Ecology from La Universidad Nacional of San Antonio Abad del Cusco in 2007, a Master's degree in Environmental Studies with a specialty in Environmental Anthropology in 2012, and a Master's degree in International Studies with a specialty in Latin American Resource Management in 2013. Her Quechua short story "Aya umamanta" received an honorable mention for the "Interregional Culture Prize" competition organized by the National Culture Institute of Cusco, Peru. This achievement solidified her passion for sharing the Quechua language (runa-simi), bringing her to Michigan to lecture. She infuses her classes with her rich knowledge of ethnobotany, cultural exchange, and storytelling.



Faculty Affiliates

LACS is proud to connect interdisciplinary faculty, staff, and students from every unit across campus to one another through our shared interests and work in and on Latin America and the Caribbean. Meet two of our newest faculty member affiliates!



Luciana de Souza Leão is an LSA Postdoctoral Fellow in the Sociology Department at the University of Michigan, where she will start as an Assistant Professor in the summer 2021. She received her PhD in Sociology at Columbia University, as well as an MA in Sociology and Anthropology from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and a BA in Economics from Puc-Rio. She is a political sociologist who studies knowledge, power, and inequality in comparative perspective. She has three main areas of research. First, she investigates the critical role that policy knowledge plays in shaping how states design, implement, and evaluate social policies. Second, she examines the enduring effects that state institutions have on the reproduction of inequalities. Third, she focuses on racial inequality as both an

ideological construction and a realm of action. Across all her research, she draws on a wide array of methods, from in-depth interviews and archival work to statistical analysis of longitudinal national surveys.

Devi Mays is Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. She received her BA in Religious Studies at the University of British Columbia in 2006 and her PhD in History and Jewish Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, in 2013. Dr. Mays works on transnational Jewish networks in the Mediterranean and global contexts, with a focus on Sephardic Jews. She spent a year in Istanbul and in 2013-14 was a postdoctoral fellow at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Her dissertation, "Transplanting Cosmopolitans: The Migrations of Sephardic Jews to Mexico, 1900-1934," deals with Sephardic migrants between the Ottoman Empire, its successor states, and Mexico, studying the transnational identities, networks, and citizenships which they cultivated to circumvent restrictions imposed by the Ottoman, Mexican, and Turkish states. She shows that exploiting commercial and familial



networks between formerly Ottoman lands, France, the United States, Cuba and Mexico ensured for Sephardic migrants a geographic and social mobility that challenged the physical borders of the state and the conceptual boundaries of the nation. Her second project explores the Ottoman capital of Constantinople as a central stage upon which Jewish subtonic and imperial affiliations collided and coalesced, a lynch-pin between the Jewish Black Sea and the lewish Mediterranean.

FACULTY Spatiant

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN CULTURE, HISTORY, AND LATINA/O STUDIES

AFFILIATED FACULTY, CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STUDIES INTERIM DIRECTOR, LATINA/O STUDIES PROGRAM 2020-2021

INTERVIEW AND TEXT BY NICHOLAS FARRUGIA



ANTHONY P. MORA is the author of the 2011 book: Border Dilemmas: Racial and National Uncertainties in New Mexico, 1848-1912, which speaks on the social and political aftermath of the U.S.-Mexican War. He graduated summa cum laude from the University of New Mexico in 1996 with a B.A. in History, later going on to earn an M.A. and Ph.D. in History, both from the University of Notre Dame.

Research Specialization

Dr. Mora's research and teaching has primarily focused on the lives of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the U.S. Southwest. Before beginning at Michigan with a joint appointment in the Departments of American Culture and History, Dr. Mora served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Texas A&M University from 2002-2007. With a number of publications marked with his name, notably the 2011 book, Border Dilemmas: Racial and National Uncertainties in New Mexico, 1848-1912, Dr. Mora is well-established in the field and continues to explore the different avenues within ongoing racial discourses. In an age driven by the influence of the media, Dr. Mora takes a novel approach to the topic in relation to his own studies, and investigates the renowned tale of the masked vigilante Zorro.

With a wealth of knowledge on the perspective and experience shared by Latinx populations, studying Zorro allows him to question how media portrayals of Latinx people compared to their actual lived experiences. What has it meant to have Zorro, a Mexican character, at the center of U.S. popular culture during moments of extreme anti-Mexican sentiment?

Zorro

A Contentious Past

To understand the story of Zorro and its social and political relevance, it is critical to know the history of Mexican Americans and Latinx peoples in the United States. Zorro's many incarnations most often presented a fantastical view of Spain's colonial presence in North America. Those representations rarely depended upon actual historical knowledge. In places like New Mexico, racial injustices have persisted for centuries. Pueblo peoples and other native groups had made their lives in what is today the southwestern U.S.hundreds of years before European colonialism began.

Between the mid 16th to mid 19th century, periods of oppression and revolution plagued the region as Spain sought to assert total control. Mexican independence in 1821 brought little change for most Native groups as the United States and Mexico shortly after devolved into war in 1846. This pivotal turning point would prove deeply injurious to Native peoples and established racial tropes that configured Mexicans as lesser than Euro Americans. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848 ended the war by requiring Mexico cede its northern territories of Alta California, New Mexico, and Texas to the U.S. Many Euro Americans migrated to the newly acquired territories and created stories about their triumphant Western settlement. Their demands for ever more land came at the expense of the established Native American and Mexican American communities. Euro Americans brought with them ideas of Native and Mexican inferiority which they used to justify second-class social status. Yet, the U.S. could not entirely deny that the incorporation of these lands had radically enhanced the heterogeneity of the nation's population.

Scholars, artists, and others have long debated how to understand that reality and its intersection with U.S. history.

Zorro: The Masked Vigilante

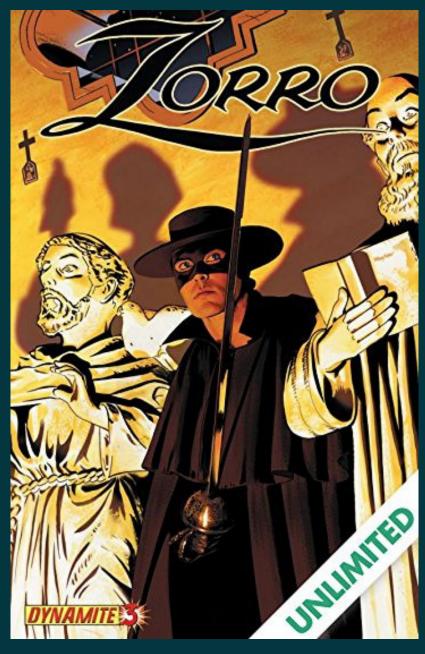
Dr. Mora's quest to understand the masked vigilante's place in those debates grew out of his previous work. Border Dilemmas documented the experiences of the first generations of Mexican people who became part of the U.S. after the U.S.-Mexican War. Growing up in New Mexico, he saw how that history rarely found representation in school curricula or professional history books. For the most part, the U.S. has sought simply to forget that large parts of the nation had direct links to Mexico or Mexican history. The few Latinx characters which appeared in U.S. entertainment tended to be restricted to stereotypical roles such as maids, bandits, or drug dealers. Most often they were villains who Euro Americans had to defeat or loyal servants who asked for nothing.

Even with the global media coverage of the 21st century and the supposed 'changing' values of how minority populations are viewed, there is still a major gap in coverage on the issues impacting Latinx people in the U.S. Yet, Zorro has stood as a surprising exception. Some have argued that his creation in 1919 made him the first widely recognized representation of a "superhero". Prolific writer Johnston McCulley first created Zorro in 1919 for a series of stories in a pulp magazine. Unlike his many other characters, McCulley's Zorro struck a chord with U.S. audiences almost immediately. Born as a wealthy Spanish landowner in Los Angeles in the early nineteenth century, McCulley's first story explained, Diego de la Vega secretly developed his acrobatic agility and astute sword-wielding skills. At night, disguised as the masked vigilante Zorro, de la Vega fought against tyranny and oppression of California's poor. Over the past century, Zorro faced many enemies. They almost all shared a commonality of being greedy, corrupt and tyrannical oppressors/villains. Suited with his signature all-black cape, mask and sombrero, Zorro became the archetype of the masked vigilante in U.S. popular culture. Dr. Mora argues, however, the face behind the mask has a deeper story...

A Novel Representation

Many people who enjoy a Zorro movie or comic book are looking for escapist entertainment. Few have likely considered the meaning of Zorro's ethnic identity of the hero. He is, however, shockingly still quite unique. According to Dr. Mora, both Marvel and DC comics have developed different Latinx characters in the past few decades; but their storylines often appeared minor compared to the more 'bankable' heroes like Spider Man, Wonder Woman, or the Flash. Zorro's long history and setting in colonial southern California makes him unusual. Over the years, Dr. Mora suggests Zorro's caretakers have changed elements of the character to fit the changing social and political climate within the U.S.

"The goal with Zorro was to think about how the U.S. has understood its Mexican populations from past and present – Zorro has been a complicated means to acknowledge the past and present of Mexican representation or portrayal in the media."



The Face behind the Mask

Zorro has always remained recognizable, but subtle elements have been altered to make him seem relevant to new generations. One of the most notable changes has been de la Vega's racial identity. McCulley made clear that his hero was a "pure Spanish" haciendado who benevolently protected the supposedly weak Native Americans and Mexican peons in his midst. In the 1950s, Disney developed a popular TV series spinning new tales of Zorro. Mexican Americans from the time criticised the program for its almost total lack of Latinx writers and the small number of Latinx actors assigned roles. In the 1960s and 70s, as civil rights movements challenged all aspects of society, Zorro received even greater critique. Many saw his California setting as "white-washing" the brutal relationship between Spanish colonists and local Native Americans. Zorro's loyal butler, Bernardo,



originally a mute and deaf Native American man in McCulley's story, received particular scrutiny. Altering different times. To address the mounting critics, creators eventually developed new origins for masked heroes. Zorro made a big return in the 1990s in the Hollywood blockbuster "The Mask of Zorro" starring Antonio Banderas. The Spanish actor became a new Zorro with hopes of boosting enthusiasm for the superhero among Latinx communities. The writers tapped into actual California history to make Banderas' character the fictional brother of Joaquin Murrieta, a real outlaw who many claimed to be the "Mexican Robin Hood" during California's Gold Rush. Sequels to the movie failed to keep up wide interest in the character; but Zorro still persists with a loyal fanbase. Most recently de la Vega has been made the son of a real-life Native American woman

named Toypurnia who planned a revolt against Spanish colonial rule in California in the eighteenth century. Efforts to confront a history riddled with oppression and discrimination in the southwest

results in a convoluted storyline for the masked vigilante.

An Identity Yet Uncovered

"There is such an imperative to learn about Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the U.S. and hopefully Zorro can be the catalyst to this discussion, an encouragement of people to think about these topics and ask questions."



Dr. Mora continues his research on Zorro's identity and his capricious portrayal in the entertainment industry. Last year, Dr. Mora was nominated to represent the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LACS) at a Google event for the Latinx employee resource group 'HOLA' during Hispanic Heritage Month. Dr. Mora and LACS staff traveled to Google's Ann Arbor campus for this University-Business partnership. There, he was able to introduce employees to a history of Mexico and U.S.-Mexico relations as well as present his research on Zorro thus far. Beyond this, Dr. Mora has spoken at multiple events regarding the rampant anti-Mexican sentiment that continues to plague the nation. He hopes that in better understanding the character of Zorro and his identity, he can better understand how the public perceives the very people that Zorro is trying to represent.

Community Partnerships

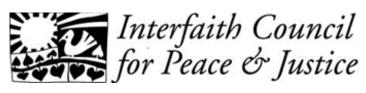
LACS was honored to work with long-time partners at the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ) Latin America Caucus over the summer. The summer months are not the typical time for event planning at LACS, as many of our students, faculty, staff, and community partners use this time to travel abroad. With this summer keeping most of us at home, we were thrilled that ICPJ invited us to collaborate and co-sponsor two incredible virtual panels.

Learning from Our Neighbors: Cuba's Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic took place on June 16, 2020 and featured Peter Kornbluh, Senior Analyst at the National Security Archive in Washington D.C., Peter Rosset, Professor of Agriculture, Society, and Environment at El Colegio de la Frontera Sur in Chiapas, Mexico, and Dayan Monier, Cuban translator, interpreter, and Professor of English for Cuban government agencies and private companies.

Honduras: Militarism, Repression, and Resistance followed on July 21, 2020 with Amelia Frank-Vitale, doctoral candidate in Anthropology and LACS Graduate Certificate student at U-M, and Mary Anne Perrone, longtime activist with local organizations ICPI, Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, and Washtenaw Congregational Sanctuary.







Interfaith Council the ICPJ Latin America Caucus devotes itself to education and action on Latin America concerns, especially U.S. policy in that region. The task force organizes educational programs about the

US military presence in Latin America and how corporate globalization affects the poor in that region. LACS and the ICPJ Latin America Causus (previously the Latin America Task Force) have collaborated for many years, co-sponsoring events and film screenings and sharing resources. This university-community collaboration has allowed LACS and ICPI to reach a wide variety of business owners, teachers, Latin Americanists from local universities, non-profits, and other community members with an interest in Latin America and social justice.

LOCAL BUSINESS OUTREACH

LACS was happy to continue its partnership with the Ann Arbor campus of the Thomson Reuters Corporation after teaming up last summer for their employee-run "Brazil Week." That July, Professor Sueann Caulfield traveled to the Thomson Reuters campus with LACS staff to deliver a public lecture to employees on race and gender in Brazilian popular identity.



For this year's Latin America culture week, Thomson Reuters elected to focus on Argentina. **Dr. Paulina Alberto (pictured, right)**, U-M Associate Professor of History, Spanish, and Portuguese, graciously agreed to participate and deliver a virtual lecture for Thomson Reuters employees on July 30, 2020. Her virtual lecture was based on her forthcoming book, Black Legend: 'El Negro' Raúl Grigera and Racial Storytelling in Modern Argentina.

Jessica Clarke-Estrada of the Thomson Reuters Latino Employee Network reflected on this year's lecture and the virtual format. "It was fantastic having Paulina present to our Latino Employee Network today!" Clarke-Estrada wrote after the event. "She did a great job of using our virtual platform to present the research she has done for her upcoming book on the Black Legend in Argentina to our Latino Employee Network. Since the event was virtual, we actually got to expand the audience outside of just Ann Arbor and also record it for those unable to attend. We learned a lot about the Afro-Argentine experience as well as racism and being a black celebrity in Argentina. I really appreciate our partnership with your program and what we've learned from your professors! I hope we can continue to find ways to support and learn from one another."

LACS is pleased to partner with Ann Arbor area businesses as part of our National Resource Center (NRC) outreach work, funded by a Title VI grant from the US Department of Education.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OUTREACH



LACS was a proud co-sponsor of the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education (MIIIE) Curriculum Workshop on Human Security, Freedoms, and Rights. This workshop was hosted from August 3-7, 2020 in a virtual format. Fourteen community college faculty were selected to attend. The following seven curriculum modules with Latin American content were created as a result of the workshop:

Refugee Crises, International Institutions, and Peoples' Livelihood Rights and Responsibilities of Immigrants

Cross-Country Comparisons of Socio-Economic Groups Governance in the USA and its interface with the world Sexual and Economic Rights of Women

Cross-Cultural efforts to improve Human Rights and Freedoms
Cross-Cultural Analysis and "the Other"



Updates from the desk of the



Brazil Initiative - LACS - Taubman Collaboration

LACS and the Brazil Initiative partnered with Professor Ana Paula Pimentel Walker of the U-M Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning on her International Studio Service Learning Experience in Brazil. This capstone course, URP 603, is titled Autogestão, Agora! Self-Management, Now! People-Led Housing Production.

Housing policy for zero- to low-income groups in large Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Mexico, privileges the model of publicly subsidized, developer-led housing production. In recent years, this approach to housing provision often resulted in poorly constructed homes, sprawl, corruption, and enormous profit to multinational developers and investors. Generally, in the Americas, self-managed housing cooperatives do not represent one percent of the housing stock. Even countries with a tradition of Co-ops, like Canada and Uruguay, face challenges in reaching scale. By contrast, in several European countries, the not-for-profit sector





can reach one-third of the housing stock. This capstone investigates the challenges of implementing self-managed housing production via mutual assistance in Brazil. In partnership with the União dos Movimentos de Moradia (UMM) [Union of Housing Movements], this course aimed to advance the agenda of self-management housing construction via social movements. Students and client-partners conceptualized. instrumentalized and disseminated legal concepts for common property managed by residents.

Students traveled to Brazil in February, before COVID-19 travel restrictions were in place. Over the summer, the students worked to create an interactive online mapping platform of anll UMM housing projects in São Paulo. They also created educational materials about autogestão and community property, project specific interventions for green infrastructure and/or public spaces, and they provided research support for the development of federal legislation on community property and third sector housing production.

Materials created were translated into Portuguese with funding support from LACS and the Brazil Initiative. The translated materials will be posted to a bilingual website developed by the capstone students and educational pamphlets will be printed and distributed to families living in or applying for public housing projects. UN-HABITAT will publish this as a case-study in a compilation of global case studies of NGO-State partnerships for housing delivery.



Global Feminisms Project

The U-M Global Feminisms Project (GFP) collects interviews with women's movement activists and women's studies scholars in sites around the world. The archive includes interviews with women from Brazil, China, Germany, India, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, and the United States. A group of interdisciplinary faculty and graduate students worked over the summer on a section of the digital archive of interviews from Brazil. This section is supported by the LACS Brazil Initiative.



During a typical summer, **The Quito Project (TQP)** would be spending a month in Quito, Ecuador working closely with partners at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito and Caritas la Primavera to administer an eductional summer camp. However, in the midst of the global pandemic, TQP and their 2020 summer cohort had to reevaluate their plan and their efforts. With no longer being able to travel to Ecuador to run the summer program, the members of The Quito Project turned their gaze towards developing a research design process to better serve the families in Ecuador during these trying times. Ecuador, among other developing nations, was hit particularly hard by the Covid-19 virus, and with little in health care infrastructure, is still struggling to mitigate the

impact of the pandemic. Cities like Guayaquil, on the western coast of Ecuador, experienced record high outbreak numbers becoming one of the epicenters in Latin America. The radiating effects of the outbreak are still being experienced by families all across Ecuador.

With the travel restraints faced by TQP, Junior undergraduate students Abigail Haile and Taranbir Kaur worked over summer to design a survey instrument to better evaluate how TQP can serve those families in Ecuador that would have otherwise been involved in the summer program. Before Covid-19, both Abigail and Taranbir were members of the TQP cohort for Summer 2020. Working in collaboration with two students from the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Claudia and Sara, Abigail and Taranbir are developing a project to assess the needs of the students and families they work with in Ecuador. Administered via phone call, Claudia and Sara will conduct a 10 question survey that will evaluate how the families and surrounding community can best be served. Coming from lower SES backgrounds, many of the families are unable to access the resources necessary to combat the effects of Covid-19. The survey largely serves to determine what supplies TQP can provide families despite not being able to mentor their children. While helping to establish and maintain connections with the families being served, the research assessment also informs how TQP will shape their program moving forward. With no telling on how the situation in Ecuador will progress, The Quito Project will use the collected data to inform fundraising efforts as well the viability of TQP sending a cohort to Quito in the near future. In the meantime, Abigail and Taranbir are continuing to revise the plans for survey implementation and analysis while the remainder of TQP and its members develop fundraising plans to best serve the families in Ecuador.



Taranbir Kaur, double major in Spanish and Social Theory & Practice



Abigail Haile, double major in Anthropology and Psychology

"Given the global Covid-19 situation, we wanted to take the opportunity to do something to help the community that we couldn't serve by continuing involvement in fundraising efforts and meeting the needs of the families."

translating for the classroom

Over the past four years, the University of Michigan's collaborative outreach project with the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) has grown and refocused around teacher training and content development and dissemination. The March 2020 event took another positive step in this direction as it included teachers and administrators from San Juan, including representatives of the Sistema Educativo Municipal (SEM) and the Puerto Rican Department of Education. To continue to expand this project's reach and impact on the island, we've long discussed translating the entirety of our Educational Toolkits into Spanish. This summer, with the help of two UM graduate students, we began this endeavor!

Since 2018, we have been fortunate to include Darin Stockdill of the U-M Center for Education Design, Evaluation, and Research (CEDER) in the U-M/UPR collaboration. Darin helps guide each cohort of graduate student presenters at the annual workshop as they transform a piece of their research into an engaging lesson plan for high school classrooms. Later, Darin and the LACS team compile these lessons into a "toolkit" that is publicly available for teachers on the U-M/UPR project page. Until now, most of the lessons in each toolkit have only been available in English.

U-M/UPR Outreach Collaboration





A joint project between the University of Michigan and University of Puerto Rico

2018 Symposium

The University of Puerto Rico and University of Michigan Outreach Collaboration



Political Tensions and Identity in a Globalized World

EDUCATION TOOLKIT



CENTER FOR EDUCATION
DESIGN, EVALUATION, & RESEARCH

Over the summer, LACS hired U-M graduate students Jennifer Sierra and Javier de Jesús Astacio (bios and photos below) to lead the translation effort. We began with the 2019 toolkit, an ambitious 159-page collection of teaching resources on "Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism across Borders." Individual lessons in the 2019 toolkit range from historical pan-Africanism to questions of citizenship in Thailand to Afro-Argentine identity. Translating so many different topics has required sustained effort and curiosity on the part of our translators. They not only work to get the language right and find consistency in their prose, they also learn about the various topics in order to express a stronger command of the lesson in their translation.

By October 2020, the 2019 toolkit will be available in both English and Spanish. We will then proceed immediately to working on the 2018 and the recently drafted 2020 editions. There is plenty of translation work to be done at LACS these days! In these uncertain times of distant and hybrid education, it is our hope that these efforts contribute to easing the burden on teachers who seek to find classroom-ready content lessons, both in Puerto Rico and on the mainland.



The translation team at a virtual check-in. Clockwise from top left:

Tim Lorek, LACS Community Outreach Coordinator

Alana Rodriguez, LACS Program Manager

Javier de Jesús Astacio, LACS Translator

Jennifer Sierra, LACS Translator

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

staff transitions



We share the bittersweet news that **Howard Tsai**, LACS Indigenous Languages Program Coordinator, has accepted a new position as a LEO Lecturer I in the Program in International and Comparative Studies (PICS). While we are saddened to say goodbye, we're glad to note he still works nearby in the International Institute!

Howard has worked at LACS since 2014, most recently as the coordinator of our Indigenous Languages program, and he has taught an array of popular classes for LACS and for PICS. Indeed, as many across the university have transitioned to virtual teaching as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it's worth noting that Howard has long been a promoter and an innovator of digital technologies that can enhance the classroom, such as through his work using 3D digitization and printing to bring museum artifacts into students' hands, his successful efforts to virtually share our Quechua language classes with students from other universities through the BigTen Academic Alliance CourseShare program, and his designs for a future Massive Online Open Course on Quechua Language and Culture. It is thus fitting he is now a full-time LEO Lecturer I with PICS, where, among other duties, he will teach International Studies 101 each term, becoming the first instructor many of our students in the II will come to know.





Howard Tsai just released his new book, Las Varas: Ritual and Ethnicity in the Ancient Andes.



Mary E. Gallagher, Amy and Alan Lowenstein Professor in Democracy, Democratization, and Human Rights in the Department of Political Science, has been appointed as the director of the International Institute. Professor Gallagher is a specialist in Chinese politics, comparative politics of transitional and developing states, and law and society. She enters this role with a deep familiarity with the II, having been director of the Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies since 2008. Professor Gallagher will lead the II as director from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2025.



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SUPPORT LACS AND THE BRAZIL INITIATIVE

We strive to support our students and faculty on the front lines of learning and research and to steward our planet, our community, our campus. To do this, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and the Brazil Initiative need your support.

If you are considering a gift to LACS and/or the Brazil Initiative at LACS, we want you to know that your gift will help us guarantee that U-M students will have an opportunity, in perpetuity, to study the cultures, histories, languages, and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean and contribute to scholarship and involvement in the region. Visit **ii.umich.edu/lacs/donate** for more info.





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