


Spring 2013

La Voz Spring 2013

El Instituto: Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean, and Latin American Studies

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Recommended Citation

El Instituto: Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean, and Latin American Studies, "La Voz Spring 2013" (2013). *La Voz*. 7.
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El Instituto

Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean, and Latin American Studies

LA VOZ



JANUARY 2013

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *La Voz*, El Instituto's newsletter. On July 1st, 2012 the University of Connecticut inaugurated El Instituto: Institute of Latina/o, Caribbean and Latin American Studies, a new research institute in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. El Instituto is a merger and revision of all the constituent elements of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS, est. 1974) and the Institute of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies (IPRLS, est. 1994). El Instituto's faculty engage in research and teaching concerning hemispheric Latina/o diasporas, U.S. Latina/os, Latin American and Caribbean societies and U.S./Latin American relations related to coloniality, race, migration, education, media, economics, health, cultural studies and human rights. Offering BA and MA degrees grounded in both traditional disciplinary and interdisciplinary methodologies, El Instituto provides a central place for research, scholarship, and academic programs uniting over 60 scholars at the University of Connecticut who are either jointly appointed with departments or hold affiliate faculty appointments.

—Mark Overmyer-Velázquez

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Photo by Yara Zoccarato

EL INSTITUTO CO-HOSTS RIGOBERTA MENCHU TUM

Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Prize winner and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, visited UConn on September 11, 2012. Renowned for her testimonial autobiography, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, Ms. Menchú delivered the UNESCO Chair and Institute of Comparative Human Rights Lecture in the Student Union Theatre. She also met with a small cohort of graduate students to speak about present human rights conditions in Guatemala.

Ms. Menchú spoke about her current efforts with the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation where she works to bring cases of civilian human rights abuse atrocities, which occurred during the armed conflict in Guatemala, to justice. She encounters many barriers as a human rights activist due to the current Guatemalan regime, however, she strives to seek justice and more importantly establish a legal framework that will transcend

throughout time. Ms. Menchú's commented that her career and aspirations require a large amount of spiritual strength. Menchú explained that she does not see herself as a victim, in spite of the horrible tragedies that her family and community have endured, which cannot be described in words.

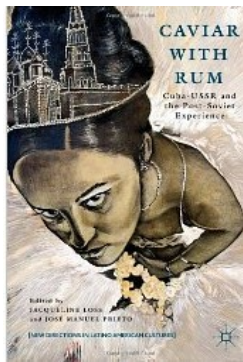
Ms. Menchú's visit was facilitated by the UNESCO Chair and Institute of Comparative Human Rights and co-sponsored by the African American Cultural Center, Asian American Cultural Center, Asian American Studies Institute, College of Liberal

Arts and Sciences Dean's Office, Dept. of History, El Instituto, Honors Program, Institute of African American Studies, Office of Global Affairs, Office of the Provost, Office of Student Services and Advocacy, Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center, Rainbow Center, Residential Life, Women's Center, and Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies.

"Most importantly,
I am Mayan"

NEW BOOKS

Caviar with Rum: Cuba-USSR and the Post-Soviet Experience New Directions in Latino American Culture)



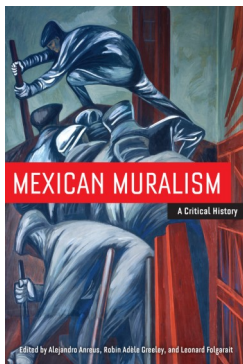
Dr. Jacqueline Loss, Associate Professor of Latin American Literacy and Cultural Studies in UConn's Department of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages, recently published Caviar with Rum: Cuba-USSR and the Post-Soviet Experience (New Directions in Latino American Culture) with Dr. José Manuel Prieto of Seton Hall University. Dr. Loss and Dr. Manuel Prieto state in their introduction that “no country in Latin America has escaped the symbolic influence of the United States to the extent that Revolutionary Cuba has. This resistance meant that for approximately three decades the Soviet Union had an invitation to intervene in practically all Cuban spheres.” The book is a compilation of sixteen different essays contributed by renowned writers and artists. The authors explain that “Caviar with Rum is the first book to explore how and why the Soviet period is revisited these days and what this means for creative production and the future of geopolitics.” For more information and to purchase this work, visit Amazon.com

Utopía, distopía e ingravidez : reconfiguraciones cosmológicas en la narrativa post-soviética cubana

Dr. Odette Casamayor Cisneros, Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Literature, Cultures and Languages Department at the University of Connecticut will be releasing her book Utopía, distopía e ingravidez: reconfiguraciones cosmológicas en la narrativa post-soviética cubana (Utopia, Dystopia and Ethical Weightlessness: Cosmological reconfigurations in post-Soviet Cuban Fiction), in the coming months. Dr. Casamayor Cisneros explains that her book “forthcoming with Editorial Iberoamericana-Vervuert, examines, through the lens of literary production, the existential void experienced by Cubans after the collapse of the Socialist Bloc in the 1990s.”



Mexican Muralism: A Critical History



Dr. Robin Adèle Greeley, Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art History at UConn, published Mexican Muralism: A Critical History with Alejandro Anreus of William Paterson University and Leonard Folgarait of Vanderbilt University. Anreus, Greeley, and Folgarait explain in their book description that “in this comprehensive collection of essays, three generations of international scholars examine Mexican muralism in its broad artistic and historical contexts, from its iconic figures — Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros — to their successors in Mexico, the United States, and across Latin America. These muralists conceived of their art as a political weapon in popular struggles over revolution and resistance, state modernization and civic participation, artistic freedom and cultural imperialism. The contributors to this volume show how these artists’ murals transcended borders to engage major issues raised by the many different forms of modernity that emerged throughout the Americas during the twentieth century.”

VISITING PROFESSOR FALGUNI SHETH

On September 25th, 2012, El Instituto's Visiting Professor Falguni Sheth spoke with a group of students about her book, Toward a Political Philosophy of Race, which looks at how liberal society enables racism and other forms of discrimination. Sheth is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Political Theory at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. Sheth began the conversation by explaining that she did not want the cover of her book to be black and white. Books that address issues of race tend to follow a prescriptive black and white schematic. Sheth stated that race is not defined as only black or white and that she did not want the cover of her book to represent that simplistic view. In addition to examining racism, Sheth introduced ideas of xenophobia which she explained as currently more accepted than racism. However, Sheth stated that xenophobia easily fits into the realm of racism and is just as important to recognize. Sheth raised the idea of U.S. foreign policy and whether it is a racialized institution. She explained that there exists a prevalent racial imaginary of the “homeland” which is thought to protect its people. Sheth questioned this concept and wondered if the concept is grounded in xenophobia or racism. Professor Falguni Sheth consistently tracks her research and findings and updates them on her blog which can be viewed at: <http://translationexercises.wordpress.com/author/philobabe/>

EL INSTITUTO CORE FACULTY

Mark Overmyer-Velázquez

*Director, El Instituto
Associate Professor, History*



Professor Overmyer-Velázquez trained at Yale University as a historian of Latin American and US Latinos. He completed his recent book, *Beyond la Frontera: The History of Mexico-U.S. Migration* (Oxford, 2011), as a Peggy Rockefeller Visiting Scholar at Harvard. His new work, *Global Latinos: Latin America Diasporas and Regional Migrations*, analyzes the lives of Latina/os in their hemispheric and global diasporas and emerged from his work as a Fulbright Scholar studying the history of Peruvian migrants in Chile.

Marysol Asencio

*Professor, Human Development
and Family Studies*



Dr. Asencio received her Dr.Ph from Columbia University. Her research interests include Latina/os, Gender, Sexualities, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Race Immigration, Social and Health Inequalities, and Qualitative Research Methods.

Odette Casamayor Cisneros

*Assistant Professor,
Literatures, Cultures, and Languages*



Dr. Casamayor Cisneros holds an MA in Cultural Politics from the University of Dijon/UNESCO Paris and a doctorate in Art and Literature from L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris. Her research interests include contemporary Caribbean, Latin American and Latino literatures and Afro-diaspora and blackness.

Anne Gebelein

*Assistant Director, El Instituto
Associate Professor in Residence*



Dr. Gebelein received her doctorate, M. Phil., and Master's in Hispanic Literatures from Yale University. Her research interests include Border and Immigration studies, testimonial literature, and contemporary Latin American and Latino literature.

Samuel Martinez

*Associate Professor,
Anthropology*



Professor Martínez is a Cuban-born ethnologist. His current research and writing brings critical scrutiny to the writings of northern human rights monitors, journalists and social scientists about Haitian-ancestry people in the Dominican Republic. He is also doing background research on antislavery narratives of the late 20th & early 21st centuries.

Xaé Alicia Reyes

*Professor, NEAG
School of Education*



Dr. Reyes earned her Ph.D. from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research interests include Bilingual Education, Foreign Language Education, Critical Pedagogy, School Reform, Multicultural Education Issues, and Classroom Discourse.

Diana Ríos

*Associate Professor,
Communication Sciences*



Dr. Rios received her Ph.D. from the University of Texas-Austin. Her research cuts across specialties in communication by considering mass and intercultural communication processes—particularly in Audience Media Use. Her research areas include: Communication, Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies, Ethnicity/Race and

Charles Venator Santiago

*Assistant Professor,
Political Science*



Dr. Venator Santiago received his Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. His current research focuses on the relationship between the status of unincorporated territories and U.S. Global Empire with a special focus on political status questions, citizenship, public health, and political participation.

CHINESE PIRATES AND MEXICAN MERCHANTS



On Sept 10th, students and faculty gathered at the Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center (PRLACC) for a panel discussion concerning “Chinese Pirates and Mexican Merchants: Intersections of Asian and Latin American Studies” led by Dr. Julia Schiavone-Camacho, Assistant Professor of History at the University of TX—El Paso. Panelists included UConn History Professors Mark Overmyer-Velázquez and Jason Chang, and Professor of Philosophy and Political Theory, Falguni Sheth from Hampshire College. This event was sponsored by Asian American Studies Institute, the Puerto Rican Latin American Cultural Center and El Instituto.

ART EXHIBITION BY PROFESSOR HUMBERTO CASTRO-CRUZ



Photo by Kevin Irizarry

Professor and Artist Humberto Castro-Cruz was introduced by the Director of the Puerto Rican Latin American Cultural Center (PRLACC) Fany Hannon at the opening of his exhibit in the Student Union Art Gallery on September 24th, 2012. Professor Castro-Cruz, was invited to the United States from Cuba by Real Art Ways, an organization supporting contemporary artists, to display his work. Castro-Cruz has been the recipient of numerous awards including the UNESCO Multi-Cultural Projects Office in Paris. In 1997, he was selected as one of the two outstanding Cuban artists to have work displayed for the first New Cuban Art Exhibit.

Photo and article below by Ernesto Soto

Professor Humberto Castro-Cruz captures the relationship between man and nature in his works. His artistic inspiration of environmental subjects comes from his studies of geography, which he incorporates into his art highlighting how the environment changes through the different layers of the earth. Professor Castro-Cruz’s art is also greatly influenced by his migration to the United States from Cuba. He has been featured in multiple exhibits all around the country. Through his work, spectators are able to view the texture of his imagination of the different layers that lie beneath us.



MIGRANT FARM WORKER CLINICS

About the Clinic: Migrant farm workers are among the most economically disadvantaged and medically vulnerable groups in the United States having little, if any, access to health care or medication. Difficult access to health care includes unaffordable health insurance, language barriers, and lack of transportation. Migrant workers also experience additional barriers such as fear of deportation, lost or garnished wages, and being dismissed or not invited back to work by the employers due to missed work or health issues. A coalition of local organizations, along with the University of Connecticut (UConn), has formed a network to overcome these barriers and attend to the health care needs of migrant and seasonal farm workers. Two UConn Students were awarded fellowships during the summer of 2012 and shared their experiences. For details visit : http://publichealth.uconn.edu/aboutus_mfwc.php. Each year El Instituto with support from the UConn Honors Program sponsors a Migrant Farmer Worker Clinic Summer Intern Fellowship (MWF) for undergraduates.

Colleen Phelan

Before this summer, I had never been somewhere like O.J. Thrall Tobacco Farm. I'd never packed my car with so many folding tables, pop-up tents, boxes of medicine, jugs of water or people before. I had never taken a blood glucose reading or checked someone's blood pressure. I had never before sent so many e-mails in one summer. I had never heard so many students talk about the MCAT. This was the first summer I volunteered with the UConn Health Center Migrant Farm Worker Clinic.

I became interested in the MFW Fellowship when I took a course at UConn titled "Migrant Workers in Connecticut." The curriculum covered the history of immigration to the United States and the plight of migrant workers who divided their time between living in their homeland and working in Connecticut. As a Spanish and Economics major I have been particularly interested in immigration to the U.S. from Spanish-speaking countries. My interest in the migrant farm worker population in Connecticut, largely Mexican and Puerto Rican, continued to grow this summer.

I helped coordinate the undergraduate volunteers at the Clinics by scheduling over 50 students for different farms, leading trainings for volunteers, and volunteering at clinics at several farms. Medical students, PA students, medical interpreters, medical residents, physical therapists and physicians joined the undergraduate volunteers, many of whom aim to be future health care professionals, in running the Clinic. The Clinic provides the migrant workers health care services like free blood glucose readings, blood pressure checks, oral screenings, physical therapy treatments and more to a population that is left without access to medical care. On the farm, the workers are exposed to pesticides, hours in the sun, back-breaking labor and, since many live in barracks on the farm, the rapid spread of air-borne disease. This population finds itself with many health complaints and the workers are so appreciative of the care they receive from the Clinic.

Some nights I volunteered as a medical interpreter which was a fabulous experience. While I spoke to the workers and registered them for the Connecticut River Valley Farm Worker Health Program, they shared stories with me. I heard about how one man worked on the set for the Mel Gibson film *Apocalypto* and met Gibson. Others asked me about my studies and shared how they once went to university or were currently trying to send their children to higher education programs. Some told me about the businesses they once owned that went under or how they missed the heavenly climate of their homeland. Men lamented about how they terribly missed their wives, children, parents and all that they knew. The conversations I had with them would sometimes break my heart, but it was inspiring to hear how the workers

Charlotte Freeland

"I haven't been able to read in five years." This was the chief complaint, delivered in broken English, by José, a middle-aged Hispanic man at a farm in Windsor, CT. As one of the thousands of seasonal workers who come to Connecticut every summer to harvest tobacco, this gentleman was among dozens of workers lined up at our mobile clinic. "I can't read, too much pain," José explained. I quickly examined his blood pressure, pulse, and blood glucose, all of which were normal, a benefit of heavy physical labor. I then led him over to a medical student, where together we examined his eyes and performed a vision exam. His distance vision was normal, and there appeared to be no obstructions in his eyes that would otherwise produce pain. Indeed, at the age of fifty-five, this man had simply developed hyperopia, or farsightedness, a common problem among aging adults. We were in luck that day. Someone had donated a large box of reading glasses, so I brought a few over and gave them to our patient. With a look of skepticism, but not a moment's hesitation, José tried on the first pair as I handed him my pocket-sized Spanish medical dictionary. As if the whole bustling clinic sensed the enormity of the moment, the atmosphere was suddenly still and quiet. Jose paused. Then he looked up at me with a big, half-toothless grin, and exclaimed, "¡Es un milagro! ¡Puedo leer!" I couldn't help but beam with happiness in response.

This is one of many patients and their stories that I encountered at a typical night as a volunteer at the UConn Migrant Farm Worker Clinics. While this invisible population of laborers provides an invaluable service to the agricultural sector of Connecticut's economy, these workers often do not have access to basic necessities. These free, mobile Migrant Farm Worker clinics are vital to underserved individuals, like José, who have a need for access to affordable, quality medical care.

This Migrant Farm Workers fellowship was an invaluable experience that served my academic needs by enhancing my knowledge of these individuals, enabling me to probe further into migrant worker health issues, a topic intimately connected to access to quality medical care, and the national agenda of decreasing this gap in access and increasing the number of health professionals to serve these marginalized populations. By volunteering at these clinics several nights per week, I also developed listening, empathy, and patience—all skills that will be translatable to many aspects of my life in the future. I have great respect and admiration for Dr. Bruce Gould, the founder of the Migrant Farm Clinics in CT and the medical director of the Burgdorf Community Health Center in Hartford, and likewise, I aspire to similarly establish a sustainable program and/or permanent healthcare facility that provides much needed health recourses for the “working poor”. Thus, serving as a Migrant Farm Worker Clinic student coordinator and fellowship recipient enabled me to unify my passions for service, working with underserved individuals, love of the Spanish language, and leadership skills to someday achieve my life goal as a physician dedicated to service and increasing access to quality medical care.

DIANE ALVERIO AND CTLATINOnews.com

Diane Alverio visited the University of Connecticut on November 29, 2012 to speak to students and faculty about her successful entrepreneurial venture, CTLatinoNews.com. CTLatinoNews.com is a daily online news site created to provide a voice for Latinos in Connecticut as well as engage non-Latinos on issues that impact this vibrant and dynamic segment of the state's population. Alverio explained that she had noticed a gap in information being communicated to Latinos, specifically to Latinos in Connecticut nor was this information anywhere online. She noted that 500,000 Latinos call Connecticut home and 70% of them speak English, therefore, she decided that it was best for the website to be administered in English. This is not meant to replace the Spanish language, but is an additional component to reach a growing segment of English-speaking Latinos. As a journalist, she was concerned with the media image of Latinos in the US being communicated,

which she explained was incredibly skewed as it normally portrayed Latinos in a negative manner. CTLatinoNews.com was created to change this perception. It reaches Latinos and non-Latinos and expresses the beauty of Latino culture as well as create awareness and inspire Americans to recognize Latinos as an important element of the United States' social fabric. Alverio gave an example of a story published by Hartford Magazine about "Hartford's 50 Most Influential People," in which not one Latino was recognized. CTLatinoNews.com communicated the story of the lack of representation of Latinos in this publication and it was later picked up by other news networks and released nationally. Alverio explained she wanted to make a difference and utilized CTLatinoNews.com as a mechanism to do so. Alverio inspired students to embrace their entrepreneurial spirits as well as recognize Latinos as a significant consumer segment both in CT and the United States.



Latinasandmedia.wordpress.com

VOTO LATINO AT UCONN

Prior to the Fall 2012 presidential election, the Hermanos of La Unidad Latina, Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity Inc., PRLACC, and El Instituto worked diligently to make the Latino vote. Latinos across the country played a critical role in the 2012 presidential election, particularly in swing states. Called the “sleeping giant” for years, Latinos are no different than other Americans — Latinos recognize issues concerning the economy, health care, education and immigration and had an overwhelming influence in the presidential election. With the help of El Instituto, Voto Latino spread amongst Latinos on campus. Over 50 Latino Professors, students, and staff at UCONN registered to vote. The Latino voice was recognized in this year's election and it is certain that in future elections Latinos will become a majority ethnic coalition of voters. *Contributed by Kevin Irizarry*

EL INSTITUTO GRADUATE STUDENTS



Aidali Aponte-Avilés

Aidali is a Ph.D. student in the Literatures, Cultures and Languages Department and a teaching assistant for El Instituto's PRLS/SPAN 1009 course. She has a Masters degree in Hispanic Studies from the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez, and a Bachelors degree in Natural Sciences (Biomedics) from the Inter American University, Puerto Rico. Her research is focused on current Chilean cultural products, space and memory.



Maria Berger

Maria is a second year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies with a concentration in History. She graduated from the University of Connecticut in 2010 with a B.A. in History and a B.S. in Horticulture. Her Master's project explores migration from Peru to Chile with a focus on ethnicity, gender, and human rights.



Jorge A. Castillo

Jorge received his B.A. in Spanish and Mexican American Studies from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio TX. In 2007, he completed his M.A. at UConn where he is also finishing his Ph.D. Jorge's research focuses on the influences of politico-economic factors in the construction of non-conforming genders and non-normative sexualities in Latin American and Caribbean cultural production at the turn of the 21st century.



Andrea Chunga-Celis

Andrea is a first year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies. She received her B.A. in Human Rights and Hispanic Studies from Trinity College in Hartford, CT. Her research interests include indigenous and cultural rights in Peru. She plans to research Peru's current education system and how recent history is taught to high school students.



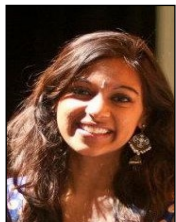
JenniAnn Colón

JenniAnn is from Austin, Texas. She is a second year graduate student pursuing her Master of Arts in Latin American Studies. She is currently a research assistant and graduate representative for the UConn Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies program. Her research interests are Puerto Rican women's sexual identities in 20th century family-planning debates in Puerto Rico.



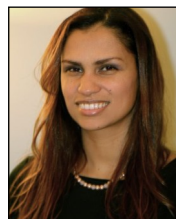
Jennifer Cook

Jenny is a second year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies. After graduating from the University of New Hampshire with a B.A. in International Development, she worked for an international labor rights organization based in Massachusetts. Jenny's M.A. project focuses on her work with Connecticut migrant farmworker population, particularly regarding the ways in which they use social networks to negotiate their marginality.



Yesha Doshi

Yesha is a first year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies. She received her B.S. in Accounting and B.A. in Spanish from UConn in 2012. Her research interests include economic development in Mexico, effects of American corporations on Mexican culture and business relations between the United States and Latin America.



Carla Silva -Muhammad

Carla is a first year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Latin American Studies. As an undergraduate at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil she majored in Portuguese and minored in Literature. For the past 6 years, Carla has worked as a Portuguese lecturer at different universities in Connecticut. Her research focuses on slum tourism, community and participation, and Police Pacification Units (UPPs) in Rio de Janeiro.

CURTIS ACOSTA: THE HIGH PRICE OF TEACHING LATINO STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR HERITAGE

“I want to thank the indigenous people of Connecticut for allowing me onto their land,” said Curtis Acosta on October 2, 2012 as he began his lecture at the University of Connecticut. Acosta is a high school teacher widely known for his struggles with education reforms in Tucson, AZ which call for a ban on Ethnic/Mexican American studies programs. Acosta, teacher of both English and Latino literature in Tucson High Magnet school, with a student population that is roughly two-thirds Latino, has been fighting administrators who

“Talking about love
in the classroom is
necessary. It is beautiful
and it is
revolutionary.”

call Acosta’s teachings anti-American. Acosta introduces provocative literature in his classes to bring forth and discuss issues of race, class, and gender among others that his students face, and, as a result, has been labeled anti-patriotic. Administrators and other officials felt that teaching the oppression of Hispanics would give rise to anti-American sentiments and incite negative behaviors. However, Acosta’s teachings and the Mexican American studies programs have been a mechanism for improving graduation rates, test scores and engaging students in the classroom.

Acosta recited a beautiful Mayan poem, “En Lak’ech” inviting all humans to love and respect each other. Acosta explained his conviction, “Talking about love in the classroom is necessary. It is beautiful, and it is revolutionary.” Acosta, accused of being an anti-American zealot, explained that he simply wants his students to embrace their indigenous roots and what he teaches in the classroom allows them to do so. It allows them to connect with their heritage and creates a space which fosters learning. He guided the audience through the discrimination and ignorance that has been extant in Arizona when he explained that intellectual capabilities of Spanish speaking students were originally assessed through examinations in English. Due to their unfamiliarity with the English language, many Latino students failed and were deemed unintelligent. Eventually a systematic change occurred and students were evaluated based on exams in their native language, causing a huge increase in “smart” Latino students. Acosta’s battle against discriminatory and ignorant institutions and systems still exists today. Through the film “Precious Knowledge” and Acosta’s lecture, UConn students were able to preview a day in Acosta’s classroom. Students experienced a fun-loving environment where Acosta easily related to his students by acting like a charming “payaso” (clown) and explaining that the music his students listen to such as

Jay-Z emit relevant and powerful messages. “You get precious knowledge everywhere,” exclaimed Acosta. By presenting the Tescatlipocas, ancient Aztec deities, Acosta integrates indigenous ideas in his classroom and demonstrated their relevance to his students today. He also highlighted the importance of self-reflection, explaining that as an educator, “when you have a bad day, it is always the teacher, not the students.” Self-reflection allows him



<http://threesonorans.com>

to connect successfully with his students. Acosta’s unconventional teaching strategies are not appreciated by all which is why he is still today fighting charges in federal courts. Acosta explains that this battle has been a long and egregious one, yet he is motivated to push along with inspiration from his grandmother, two sons, and students.

EL INSTITUTO FACULTY COVER THE 2012 ELECTION

Professor Charles Venator Santiago and Professor Matthew Singer, both from the Political Science department, spoke about the November election at a panel dialoging with the media the day after the election. Dr. Singer was quoted by *Business Insider* about Obama’s slight advantage and Dr. Venator Santiago participated in a panel discussion with other UConn faculty who discussed the logistics of Linda McMahon’s campaign.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/americans-dont-think-obama-romney-help-2012-10>
http://www.ctnewsjunkie.com/ctnj.php/archives/entry/uconn_professors_analyze_mcmahons_spectacular_failure

MEADE LECTURE AND EL INSTITUTO INAUGURAL EVENT

Jeffery Ogbar, Vice Provost of Diversity, kicked off El Instituto's inaugural event: the Robert G. Meade Jr. annual lecture and a reception announcing the Elizabeth Mahan Fund for Graduate Studies in Latin American and Latino Studies. Following Professor Ogbar's remarks, Dr. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, the Director of El Instituto, spoke about the formation of El Instituto as a product of the merger of Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and the Institute of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies. He outlined the goals for El Instituto and expressed his excitement for its future. He then introduced Dr. Elizabeth Mahan, Executive Director of the Office of International Affairs, and announced the establishment of the Elizabeth Mahan Fund for Graduate



Studies in Latin American and Latino Studies. Professor Odette Casamayor Cisneros introduced the Robert G. Meade Jr. guest lecturer for this event, Dr. Silvio Torres-Saillant, Professor and former Director of Latin American Studies at Syracuse University. Dr. Torres-Saillant began his lecture by assessing the racialization of knowledge within the project of civilization and the concept of conquest where "the loser is the one who does not retain knowledge." His discussion primarily focused on the colonial conquest of knowledge through the conquest of "the Other" under the name of God, the source of all knowledge. Dr. Torres-Saillant critically examined Christopher Columbus's impact on the indigenous peoples in the American hemisphere, and what he called the "phenomena that had split the Americas." A reception concluded the event.

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

In the Master's program, students engage in interdisciplinary study and research related to the Latina/o, Caribbean and Latin American worlds. More than 60 core and affiliated faculty scholars hail from departments throughout the university and offer a wide range of courses that examine local, hemispheric, or global dimensions of Latina/o, Caribbean, or Latin American realities. Our graduates work in education, administration, business, government, and not-for-profit organizations, and many go on to earn Ph.Ds. or other advanced degrees. UConn's Dodd Center library boasts a number of special collections in Latin American periodicals and documents that provide a wealth of original research opportunities. Our ideal location permits students access to rural and suburban settings and the bustle of major urban centers of the northeast. UConn's campus is located 35 minutes from Hartford, where there is a significant Latino population; and is driving distance to cities such as Boston and New York.

PROFESSOR REYES HOLDS WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS



Photo provided by Prof. Xaé Alicia Reyes

Professor Xaé Alicia Reyes from the UConn NEAG School of education conducted a professional development for K-12 teachers who are preparing to teach English in the US main content areas.

Photo provided by Prof. Xaé Alicia Reyes

Many teachers need support in areas of second language acquisition theory and strategies such as sheltered instruction to be able to effectively teach in their classrooms. Professor Reyes is in Thailand for the Fall 2012 semester. To learn more about Professor Reyes and her work, you can visit her website: www.xaealiciareyes.org



TINKER FOUNDATION FIELD RESEARCH GRANTS

In 2009, the Center of Latin American and Caribbean Studies was awarded a grant by the Tinker Foundation's Field Research Program to provide graduate students with travel funds to Latin America and the Caribbean. These awards allowed students to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of language and culture, to familiarize themselves with information sources relevant to their studies, to conduct pilot studies and preliminary investigations, and to develop contacts with scholars in their fields. These awards were made over a three year period and the Tinker Foundation funds were matched by funds from the University of Connecticut's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Vice Provost of Research, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Office of International Affairs.

Jack Barry, Political Science, traveled to Mexico to research whether or not the diffusion of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) help the poor move out of poverty.

Kristy Belton, Political Science, investigated whether the lives of Dominico-Haitians have improved since the 2005 Inter-American Court on Human Rights decision.

Maria Berger, Latin American Studies, investigated how migrant Peruvian and Mapuche women cope with human rights abuses and discrimination in Chile.

Emily Carrigan, Psychology, conducted research with the hearing community in Nicaragua to identify core competencies that deaf children bring to language learning.

Jorge Castillo, Spanish, traveled to Cuba to research how the socio-historical atmosphere at the turn of the 21st century has influenced sexuality and sexual labor.

Jennifer Cook, Latin American Studies, visited a Mexican migrant sending community to research how farmworkers utilize social networks to deal with their marginalization.

Michele Eggers, Social Work, investigated the criminalization of reproductive health as a violation of women's human rights in Chile.

María Fernanda Enríquez León, Political Science, investigated the environmental reform and explored development inspired by indigenous philosophies in Ecuador.

Lucia Garcia Santana, Spanish, traveled to Buenos Aires to research the transatlantic exchanges between Spanish and Argentinean intellectuals in the first half of the XX Century.

Yazmin Garcia-Trejo, Political Science, tested her hypothesis about the roots of gender differences in political knowledge among young adults in Mexico City.

Adrian Gallegos, History, traveled to Mexico and Spain to look at the relationship between Facism and Hispanismo and how certain influential individuals in Mexico understood Fascism and how they manifested their support.

Ruth Hernandez, Latin American Studies, traveled to Tlaxcala, Mexico to conduct ethnographic fieldwork and interviews on women's role in community organizing as an alternative to migration to the United States.

Rebecca Jacobs, Anthropology, researched ways in which the Trauma Textiles cooperative negotiates with volunteer tourists in Guatemala and how both groups are influenced by narratives of Maya identity.

Shawna Lesseur, Political Science, researched the Yuyachani, a theater group that speaks out against injustice, and how they reach their audience and why they believe this is transforming Peru.

Elena Lunt, History, examined Chilean archives and explored how Chileans viewed the Alliance during its formative years.

Alexander Maas, Agricultural and Resource Economics,

examined ways in which climate disruption would affect future agricultural operation in Nicaragua.

Daniela Melo, Political Science, conducted research at the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa on social movements in the Portuguese democratic transition.

Sergio Mobilia, Sociology, interviewed research subjects in Buenos Aires to discuss how gender and sexuality play out in their lives as "socially un/marked" subjects.

Alejandra Navarro-Benbow, Spanish, traveled to Mexico City to research the information exchange process that occurred around local *materia natural* and indigenous products used as instruments to facilitate colonial models.

Michael Neagle, History, examined relations among U.S. citizens and Cubans on the Isle of Pines during the early-20th century.

Caryl Nuñez, Political Science, traveled to the Dominican Republic to analyze inter-regional differences in concepts of empowerment – specifically comparing Latin American countries and sub-Saharan Africa.

Bayla Ostrach, Applied Medical Anthropology, focused on women's experiences with obstacles to abortion care in Spain.

Kristina Reardon, Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies, researched translation and connected with authors, editors and scholars in Argentina.

Margarita Sáenz-Soto, Latin American Studies, investigated if NGOs dealing with environmental issues in Peru have concentrated on the conflicts involving indigenous people and extractive activities and if so, if they involve women.

Ronnie Shepard, Anthropology, traveled to Ecuador to study masculine identity and explored the lives of ten men who have been influenced by Andrade's five themes of Latin American masculine identity.

Rachael Shenyoy, Agricultural and Resource Economics, traveled to Guatemala to create a business case for the creation of a small non-profit.

Gabriela Tafoya, Political Science, collected information from three perspectives regarding political manipulation in marginal poor urban areas to evaluate the success of the Bolsa Familia program in Brazil.

Adriana Vega, Spanish, traveled to Argentina to explore how testimonio enabled or constrained across-the-border circulation of ideology towards the military dictatorship.

Steven Williamson, Political Science, researched how the shifting role of Panamanian military institutions is understood by its own officers and how the current military leadership view democracy.

Sonia Zarco-Real, Spanish, accessed critical periodicals in Madrid to explore the process of nation-building through the press of Spain at the turn of the 20th century.

EVENTS SPRING 2013

January

Jan. 20 — HACHA: Alternative Hour for a Hospitable Community of Border-Crossing Academics. Informal graduate student and faculty gathering to share research and experiences across disciplines. Special Guest: Javier Diaz "Ceremonial Afro-Cuban Music: The role of the Beta drums on encoders of religious traditions, prayers and chants of the Yoruba diaspora," 4:30pm-6:30pm, El Instituto, Ryan Building, 2nd floor.

February

Feb. 6 — Tertulia, "Focus on the Internal Armed Conflict: The Unintended History of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights" with Dr. Luis Van Ischott, 12:00pm, Ryan Conference Room, Lunch Served.

Feb. 18, 19, 20 — Visiting Artist Favianna Rodriguez, Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center.

Feb. 18 — "Cara-a-Cara," 12:00pm-1:30 pm, PRLACC Program Room, Student Union.

Feb. 20 — Presentation, 2:00pm-4:00pm, PRLACC Program Room, Student Union.

March

Mar. 6 — HACHA with Graduate Student Tinker Reports. The focus of this meeting will be the outcomes of travels and research activities by the Tinker Grant recipients, 4:30pm-6:30pm, El Instituto, Ryan Bldg, 2nd floor.

Mar. 13 — "The Racial Incorporation of Immigrants in a Changing Southern Political Climate" by Helen B. Marrow, Asst. Professor of Sociology and Latin American Studies, Tufts University.

Mar. 14 — Ricardo Bacallao. Film screening/Workshop on Filmmaking. 12:30pm-5:00pm, PRLACC.

Mar. 26 — "China-Paraguay-Brazil: doing an ethnography in a global commodity chain." Rosana Pinheiro-Machado (Anthropology, ESPM-Brazil/ Visiting Scholar, Harvard University). TAULA Urban Workshop of the Americas/ Taller Urbano de las Américas (TAULA) meeting, 3:30pm-5:30pm.

Mar. 27 — "The Latinization of U.S. Schools" Jason Irizarry, NEAG School of Education. 2:00pm -3:30pm, PRLACC Program Room. Student Union.

April

Apr. 5 — Day in the Humanities. In honor of the 50th anniversary of Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962) and humanists' ongoing concerns about our environment, the theme for UCHI's Day in the Humanities conference will be "Silent Springs." The program will include a dramatic reading, an interdisciplinary scholarly discussion of environmentalism, and a keynote address by Professor Naomi Oreskes, author of Merchants of Doubt (2011). For more information go to www.humanities.uconn.

Apr. 5 — Eyzaguirre Lecture, César Salgado, Associate Professor University of Texas at Austin, 12:00pm—1:00 pm, Storrs Campus TBA.

Apr. 10 — Panel Presentation, "International Solidarity in Human Rights in Cold War America." 11:00am—1:00pm, Class of 1947 Room.

Apr. 13 — Connlap, "Hybrid Latinidades" Connecticut College. 9:00am - 5:00pm.

Apr. 24 — HACHA, 4:30pm-6:30pm, Ryan Building, 2nd floor.

Apr. 30 — El Instituto Book Reception, UConn Co-op Conference Room 4pm.

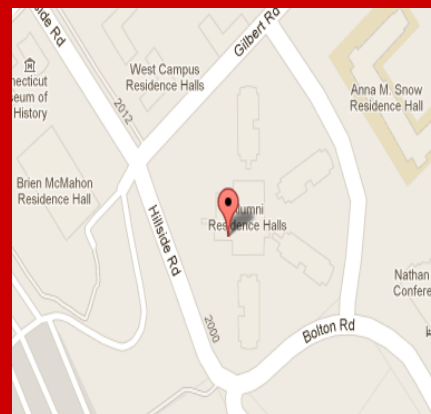
May

May 2 — Singer Lila Downs spins out traditional Mexican music with original compositions. A unique blend of blues, jazz, soul and African roots. 7:30pm-9:30 pm, Jorgensen. For more information, go to jorgensen.uconn.edu.

WHERE IS EL INSTITUTO?

El Instituto is located at 2006 Hillside Road in Storrs, CT on the University of Connecticut campus on the 2nd floor of the J. Ray Ryan building.

Walking Directions to the Ryan building from the South entrance of the UConn COOP or South Parking Garage:



1. Exit the South Parking Garage to the front of the UConn COOP and turn right (south) onto Hillside road.

2. The COOP will be to the right and Connecticut Commons dorms will be to the left. Hillside Road will intersect Gilbert road at the foot of the hill leading up to the "Y lot" parking.

3. The Ryan building is located amidst a quad of student dorms. It is the conspicuous two story building among the larger dorm buildings in the Alumni quad.

4. The J. Ray Ryan building is located diagonally from the Nathan Hale Inn.