


Fall 2013

La Voz Fall 2013

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

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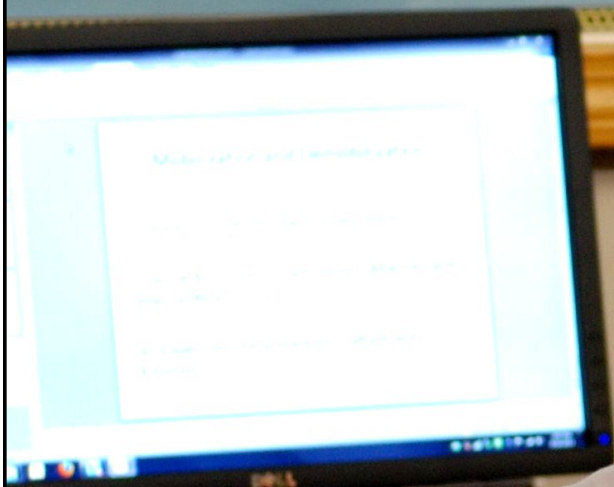


El Instituto

Institute of Latino/a, Caribbean, and Latin American Studies

LA VOZ

THE WORLD
POLITICAL



OCTOBER 2013

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Starting El Instituto's second year while remembering the 40th anniversary of Chile's coup may seem inauspicious. Yet, the anniversary reminds us to ever sharpen our analysis of Latin America's past injustices and the courageous efforts of its people to reclaim their future. As we deepen our research and prepare our students to better understand the region, its links with the United States and the history and experiences of its people in diaspora, El Instituto's faculty look forward to an exciting and dynamic year ahead. We welcome two new faculty members, our inaugural pre-doc fellow, first-year graduate students and a growing number of undergraduate majors in Latino and Latin American Studies. More than seventy joint and affiliated faculty from around the university combined with a diverse range of programs, workshops, classes and seminars make El Instituto a dynamic center of Latino/a, Caribbean and Latin American Studies for the state and country. Please join us in our many events of the semester – our October HACHA will remember and celebrate the lives of Chilean artists, Victor Jara and Pablo Neruda in song.

—Mark Overmyer-Velázquez

CONTACT US

www.elin.uconn.edu
860-486-5508

J. Ray Ryan Building, 2nd floor
2006 Hillside Road, U-1161
Storrs CT 06269-1161

Email: elinstituto@uconn.edu



Photo by Lewis Gordon

EL INSTITUTO AFFILIATE AWARDED NELSON MANDELA VISITING PROFESSORSHIP

The Nelson Mandela Visiting Professorship is offered, on a two-year basis, to a scholar of exceptional global standing by the Department of Political and International Studies at Rhodes University in South Africa, a high quality teaching and research institution. Lewis Gordon, Professor of Philosophy and African American Studies with affiliation to El Instituto and the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life at UConn Storrs, has been selected to be the next Nelson Mandela Distinguished Visiting Professor for 2014 and 2015.

Lewis R. Gordon, an American philosopher, concentrates his work on Africana thought and the study of race and racism, and touches upon postcolonial thought, theories of race and racism, philosophies of liberation, philosophy in film, and literature and philosophy of education. Professor Gordon has written

many pieces of literature in race theory, Africana philosophy, post colonial phenomenology, philosophy of existence, social and political philosophy, film and literature, philosophy of education, philosophy of human sciences, and a variety of topics in the public interest. Before joining UConn in the fall of 2013, he taught at Temple University and prior to that he taught at Brown University for eight years, during which time the program in Afro-American Studies became the Department of Africana Studies under his leadership as chairperson. He also taught at Purdue University and Yale University, and he is an ongoing Visiting Professor of Government and Philosophy at the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica. Professor Gordon has presented lectures internationally, and has been a recipient of numerous awards and distinguished fellowships.

THE DARK SIDE OF THE BOOM: GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS, AGROCHEMICAL DRIFTS AND POPULAR DEMOBILIZATION IN ARGENTINA



Photo by Matthew Perse

On Monday, September 16, Pablo Lapegna, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Georgia, presented the first TAU- LA (Urban Workshop of the Americas/Taller Urbano de las Américas) of the 2013-14 academic year. His specialty areas include environmental/rural sociology; political sociology and social movements; ethnography and qualitative methods; and Latin American Studies. TAU- LAs are a series of presentations by visiting scholars who are in the process of completing their research and corresponding published works. These presentations are followed by constructive discussions and Q&A sessions with graduate students, undergraduates and faculty members. Professor Lapegna spoke on "The Dark Side

of the Boom: Genetically Modified Crops, Agrochemical Drifts, and Popular Demobilization in Argentina." His presentation was a consolidated version of his pending book manuscript which investigates the sweeping expansion of genetically modified soybeans in Argentina and the ways in which rural populations think, feel, and act (or fail to act) when affected by environmental contamination and quotidian hardships. The incredible amount of genetically modified soybean production in Argentina

"Almost all of the soybeans produced in Argentina are genetically modified"

has created significant wealth for the Argentine government—which Lapegna refers to as "The Boom." Professor Lapegna contends that 50% of the agricultural sector in Argentina is dedicated to soybean production and that almost all of the soybeans produced in Argentina are genetically modified. Professor Lapegna brought to the

group's attention that the spraying of herbicides was very common and occurred most often when people were working outside in the field and thus forced to be exposed. Interestingly, the well known business Monsanto, is the retailer of the seeds and herbicides used. Professor Lapegna examined various existing theoretical frameworks concerning the very contemporary discussion of genetically modified crops. He explained that the contention that genetically modified crops can end world hunger is very decontextualized. He also identified the study of demobilization and social movement decline as not substantially researched, yet a critical process to understand. The faculty and students had engaging discussions with Professor Lapegna concerning the choice of concepts to articulate his thesis as well as the basis of his framework.



Photo by Yesha Doshi

LARGE FACULTY GRANTS

LARGE FACULTY GRANTS WERE AWARDED TO SEVERAL EL INSTITUTO FACULTY AFFILIATES:

Idethia (Shevon) Harvey, *Human Development and Family Studies*

Social Relationships and Diabetes Self-Management Practices among Caribbean Women Residing in Connecticut

Michael Bradford, *Dramatic Arts*

The Lorca Triptych: Love, Death, and Duende

Luis Van Isschot, *History*

Understanding the Impact of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Latin America's Conflict Zones

EL INSTITUTO GRADUATE STUDENTS



Andrea Chunga-Celis

Andrea is a second year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Latino and 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 focus her research on visual representations of Peru's armed conflict.



Yesha Doshi

Yesha is a second year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Latino and 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. Her final paper will explore the effect of Wal-Mart in Mexico on entrepreneurial development.



Inara Fernandez

Inara is a first year graduate student pursuing Master of Arts in Latino and Latin American Studies. Inara received a B.A. in Radio-TV-Film from The University of Texas in Austin. Her current research interests include the effects of globalization on indigenous cultures in South America as well as sustainable development practices. She aspires to work as a journalist or in the NGO sector.



Charlie Fuentes

Charlie is a first year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Latino and Latin American Studies. He received his B.A. in Hispanic Studies and Economics from Trinity College. He spent four years as an upper school Spanish teacher at Worcester Academy in Worcester, MA. He plans to focus his work on the role commerce and social media play in the development of identity in children and adolescents in the Latino community, particularly the undocumented community in the United States.



Melissa Huerta

Melissa is a Pre-Doctoral Fellow and a PhD candidate (ABD) in the Department of Hispanic and Italian Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her dissertation will examine the role of Latina feminism and Latinidad in the development, evolution, and practice of Teatro Luna; Chicago's only all-Latina theatre ensemble. Melissa hails from Milwaukee, WI and completed her B.A. at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and her M.A. in Spanish Language and Literature at Marquette University.



Tyra Lewis

Tyra is a first year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in Latino and Latin American Studies. She received her B.A. in English Literature, minor in Black Studies from Boston College, and a M.A. in Spanish and Spanish American literature from the University of Missouri - Columbia. Her studies will focus on contemporary Afro-Hispanic women writers of the Caribbean and Latin America.



Matthew Perse

Matthew is a first year student from Hudson, Ohio. He attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where he graduated in 2011. Matthew recently returned from Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he lived, worked, and took graduate seminars at the Universidad de Buenos Aires for 14 months before starting his studies at UConn. He will be researching Argentine social and cultural history, and is particularly interested in the world of Buenos Aires tango musicians in the early 20th Century. This is work he hopes to continue at the doctorate level.



Carla Silva -Muhammad

Carla is a second 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 cyber-protesting in Brazil as a nonviolent form of social movement.

CALL FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS BY SPANISH FILM CLUB

Following the success of the first year of Spanish Film Club (SFC), PRAGDA is happy to announce the Fall deadline for the initiative's second year, set for October 15, 2013. PRAGDA is a film distribution company created to promote, disseminate, and maintain the legacy of Spanish and Latin American cinema through unique cultural initiatives. SFC offers grants to help universities bring the very best in contemporary Ibero American cinema to campuses and to introduce students to the language and cultures of these territories. More than 100 schools have participated in the program so far. Don't miss the opportunity to be included in the next cycle! Apply for an SFC grant to cover between 30-50% of the costs. The inventive model allows universities to select a minimum of five films from our growing catalog of titles to create a film festival of Ibero American cinema on campus. The new roster of films includes Academy Award® selections *After Lucía* by Michel Franco (Mexico), *Black Bread* by Agustí Villaronga (Spain), *Clandestine Childhood* by Benjamin Ávila (Argentina, Spain, Brazil), and *The Delay* by Rodrigo Plá (Uruguay, Mexico, France), among many others. Most of the films are available in North America for the first time!

Spanish Film Club facilitates and encourages the organization of virtual Q&As with filmmakers and provides all the necessary material for the festival's promotion. To learn more, visit: www.spanishfilmclub.com.

The grant deadline is October 15, 2013. Apply Now!

FIRST HACHA OF THE SEMESTER



Photo by Carla Silva-Muhammad

El Instituto hosts HACHA (Alternative Hour for a Hospitable Community of Border-crossing Academics), an informal graduate student and faculty gathering to share research and experiences across disciplines, the first Wednesday of the month during each semester, to engage scholars socially. HACHA draws a large group eager to build a community within UConn. El Instituto encourages people from all educational backgrounds to join the celebration. Special musical guests, Alturos Duo will be performing at the October 2nd HACHA.

EL INSTITUTO WORKING GROUPS

El Instituto is funding three working groups, open to the UConn community, during the 2013-2014 academic year:

1. **The Research Colloquium in Performance Studies and Cultural Memory in Latin America** will support and engage students and faculty who are (or intend to be) involved in scholarship and/or research related to or focused on Performance Studies in Latin American and beyond. For more information contact carla.silva-muhammad@uconn.edu
2. **"Trends of Latino/a Students in Higher Education: A Look into Identity and Retention"** focuses on post-secondary education. Students and staff will meet monthly to discuss current research trends that focus on the Latina/o student. Students will conduct research on areas such as Latino/a identity, bi-cultural Latino/a students, and retention and graduation rates of Latino/a students who are involved in PRLACC's mentoring program. For more information contact Danielle.Sosias@uconn.edu
3. **TAULA: Urban Workshop of the Americas/Taller Urbano de las Américas** will consist of four free-standing seminars, with one presenter each, centered on discussion of a pre-circulated paper related to urban Latin America in the humanities and social sciences. For more information contact claudio.benzecry@uconn.edu

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 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 2013 and shared their experiences. For details visit <http://publichealth.uconn.edu>. Each year El Instituto, with support from the UConn Honors Program, awards a Migrant Farmer Worker Clinic Summer Intern Fellowship (MWF) for two undergraduates.

Alexandra Buda, recipient of the 2013 Fellowship

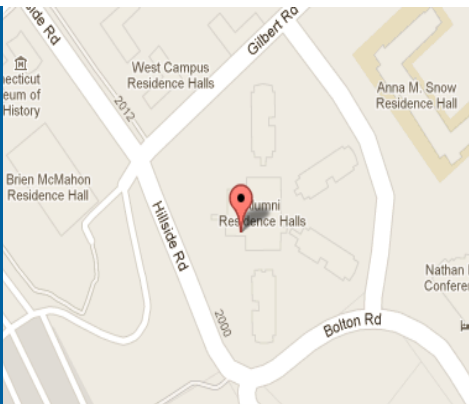
“From the moment I set foot on the O.J. Thrall farm, I instantly knew I was going to enjoy every moment of this experience. Before the spring semester, I had no idea that migrant farms existed in Connecticut, much less near my own neighborhood. During the spring of 2013, I enrolled in the Migrant Farm Workers Honors Core class taught by Professor Overmyer-Velázquez. My motivations for enrolling in such a class were twofold. First, I wanted to learn more about the social justice issue of immigration and further my understanding of how complex and engrained it is in today’s society. Secondly, being a Peruvian-American myself, I wanted to learn more about how migration affected my family and the difficulties that my mother faced when she came here at age 25. Truth be told, I learned all of those things and more. I challenged my own perceptions of immigrants, questioned why the issue is so complex, and attempted to make small changes at the local level. My interest in immigration and all of its facets continued to grow throughout the summer.

The farms are incredible. It’s truly amazing to see such an environment so close to home. I was one of the undergraduate student coordinators for the summer, which means that I scheduled over 60 volunteers for this farm season and ensured that they attended a mandatory volunteer training at the UConn Health Center before their scheduled days. Medical student coordinators, physicians, pharmacists, medical students, PA students, pharmacy students, and the undergraduates run the clinic. We all contribute for the common cause of providing health care services to the migrant workers. The clinics provide free blood pressure readings, blood glucose checks, oral screenings, physical exam, complementary medications, and the opportunity to have one-on-one contact with a physician. These workers are exposed to different chemicals and pesticides used on the plants, many hot hours in the sun, back and knee-breaking labor, and many flu-like illnesses. All of the workers truly appreciate the efforts of the Area Health Education Center and the UConn Health Center that sponsors these clinics.

While I was usually coordinating and managing the vitals stations with the undergraduates, I was often called over to serve as a medical interpreter for the registration table and the medical teams to take a patient history. Hearing the heart-wrenching stories of how these men had to leave their families behind to come to work in the fields was extremely difficult. I was truly inspired by their persistence and dedication to working hard and then returning to their homes. I now feel personally connected to these individuals and this cause. This fellowship experience serving as a student coordinator has enabled me to unify my passions for service, volunteering in underserved populations, and a love of interacting with people from different cultures. Being a part of the Migrant Farm Clinics this summer has motivated me to continue to work towards being a global doctor in trying to address prominent public health issues worldwide.”

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 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 the Alumni quad. It is the conspicuous two story building among the larger dorm buildings, diagonally across the Nathan Hale Inn.

NEW CORE FACULTY AT EL INSTITUTO

Jorge Agüero

Assistant Professor, Economics

Jorge Agüero received his Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics in 2006 and came to UConn in Fall 2013 from the University of California, Riverside, where he was Assistant Professor of Economics. He is a SALDRU Affiliate of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and an Affiliated Researcher of the Group of Development Analysis, Peru. Since 2011 he has been Associate Editor of the South African Journal of Economics.



Daisy Reyes

Assistant Professor, Sociology

Daisy Reyes received her Ph.D. in Sociology in 2012 from UC-Irvine with an emphasis on Chicano-Latino Studies. Reyes is interested in how institutions and organizational settings shape the construction of racial, ethnic, and political identities. Reyes is working on a manuscript that examines the ways universities shape Latino student experiences, identities, and political styles. She has also conducted sexuality research examining the ways Mexican-origin mothers convey sexual messages to their U.S. born daughters.



CORE FACULTY AT EL INSTITUTO

Mark Overmyer-Velázquez

*Director, El Instituto
Associate Professor, History*

Diana Ríos

*Associate Professor,
Communication Sciences*

Xaé Alicia Reyes

*Professor, NEAG
School of Education*

Samuel Martinez

*Associate Professor,
Anthropology*

Anne Gebelein

*Assistant Director, El Instituto
Associate Professor
in Residence*

Charles Venator Santiago

*Assistant Professor,
Political Science*

Marysol Asencio

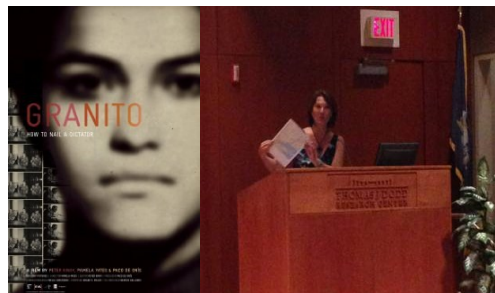
*Professor, Human
Development
and Family Studies*

Odette Casamayor Cisneros

*Associate Professor,
Literatures, Cultures, and
Languages*

“GRANITO: HOW TO NAIL A DICTATOR”

The Human Rights Institute film series for 2013-2014 followed the theme of *Aftermath: Human Rights and the Consequences of War*. The first film in this series was “Granito: How to Nail a Dictator.” Professor Victoria Sanford, founding Director of Human Rights and Peace Studies at Lehman College — an anthropologist, and publisher of four books on the Guatemalan Genocide introduced the film. Professor Sanford has conducted research in Guatemala since 1993, co-authored the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation's 1998 report to the Commission for Historical Clarification (truth commission), and served as an invited expert witness for the Spanish Tribunal's international genocide case against the Guatemalan generals culminating in working with Guatemala over 20 years. In 1982, Guatemala was engulfed in an armed conflict during which a genocidal “scorched earth” campaign by the military killed nearly



200,000 Mayan people including 45,000 who disappeared. One of the most influential people in perpetrating this genocide was General Rios Montt who headed the Guatemalan dictatorship propped up by the United States government. Professor Sanford highlighted that in April of 2013, Rios Montt was summoned by the Spanish domestic court for conviction of genocide, the first domestic court to do so. However, the Constitutional court of Guatemala annulled the verdict, an example of the high amount of impunity that reigns in Guatemala. The film is a story of a filmmaker, Pamela Yates, whose destiny has been con-

nected with General Rios Montt and joined by Guatemala's past, and how a documentary film intertwined with a nation's turbulent history emerges as an active player in the present. The film trace the filmmaker's efforts to expose the commander of genocide, Rios Montt, under the guise of movie making. The movie provided an expansive context of the internal conflict in Guatemala which forced silence upon people as they could be killed for anything during the internal conflict. She managed to film and travel with the guerilla armies as well as the Guatemalan military to witness the truth of the conflict. Yates had filmed extensive horrifying acts of violence as well as a personal interview of Rios Montt, all of which was presented to the Spanish court as evidence of his extreme involvement in the genocide. After the film, guest Speaker Victoria Sanford spoke about the film and issues that currently plague Guatemala.

JUST RELEASED: HISPANIC VALUES SURVEY

The 2013 Hispanic Values Survey: How Shifting Religious Identities and Experiences are Influencing Hispanic Approaches to Politics has just been released. The survey was conducted by Robert P. Jones, Daniel Cox, and Juhem Navarro-Rivera and published by the Public Religion Research Institute.

To download a copy, please visit <http://publicreligion.org/research/2013/09/hispanic-values-survey-2013/>

EVENTS FALL 2013

September

Sept. 4—HACHA: *Hora Alternativa para una Comunidad Hospitalaria de Académicos alambristas* (Alternative Hour for a Hospitable Community of Border-crossing Academics). Informal graduate student and faculty gathering to share research and experiences across disciplines. 5:00pm-7:00pm, Ryan Bldg 2nd floor.

Sept. 11—Victoria Sanford, Lehman College-Anthropology Dept., Rios Montt trial and introduction to the film, Granito. 4:00pm-6:00pm, Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center

Sept. 16—TAULA: Urban Workshop of the Americas/Taller Urbano de las Américas present Pablo Lapegna, University of Georgia, "The Dark Side of the Boom: Genetically Modified Crops, Agrochemical Drifts and Popular Demobilization in Argentina." 3:00pm-4:30pm El Instituto, Ryan Bldg., 2nd floor

Sept. 18—*Portraits of Courage: Latinos Shaping a Nation*. 7:00pm, Student Union Theater

Sept. 20—HRI Conference, Panel Presentation: Colombia's Search for Justice in the Time of Conflict. 2:00pm-3:00pm, Dodd Center

Sept. 23—Art Exhibit featuring works by Latino students from UConn's School of Fine Arts. 5:00pm, Student Union Theater

Sept. 25—Tertulia "Did the Swine Flu Save Lives?" by Professor Jorge Agüero, Asst. Prof., Economics. 12:00pm, El Instituto, Ryan Bldg, 2nd floor

Sept. 25—Fall Puppet Forum, "*Que Vivan los Títeres: Community Support Among Today's Mexican Puppeteers*," by Diane Daly from University of Arizona, School of Information Resources & Library Science. 7:30pm, Ballard Institute, Depot Campus

October

Oct. 2—Hilda Llorens, co-author *Arrancando mitos de raíz*. Talk: "Documenting and Challenging Racial Hierarchies in the Puerto Rican Classroom." 4:00pm-5:30pm, Class of 1947 Room, Babbidge Library

Oct. 2—HACHA: SPECIAL GUEST - Alturas Duo musical group, commemorating 40th anniversary of the death of Pablo Neruda and Victor Jara. 5:00pm-7:00pm, El Instituto, Ryan Bldg. 2nd floor

Oct. 3—Tertulia: "Hispanic Values Survey: A study on Politics, Religion, and Values Among Hispanics" by Juhem Navarro-Rivera, PhD candidate and Public Religion Research Institute Research Affiliate. 11:00am-12:15pm, Oak Hall 267

Oct. 9—Prof. Juan Battle, CUNY, "Retention of Black Men and Students of Color in Colleges." 1:00pm-3:00pm, Puerto Rican Latin American Cultural Center—Student Union, 4th floor

Oct. 9—Gala honoring legendary and extraordinary Poet, Actress, Musician, Dancer and Founder of the renowned Teatro V!da: Magdalena Gomez. 4:00pm, Student Union Theater

Oct. 9—Prof. Juan Battle, CUNY, Workshop on Professional Development with a focus on grant development and writing. 5:00pm-7:00pm, Manchester Hall

Oct. 10—Prof. Juan Battle, CUNY, "Social Justice and Sexuality." 12:30pm-1:45pm, Student Union Theater

Oct. 15—Frank Wu "Yellow and Gray: A New Paradigm for Civil Rights." 4:30pm, Student Union Theater

Oct. 22—Wendy Guerra, Cuban poet and novelist. 3:00pm, Women's Center

November

Nov. 6—HACHA: 5:00pm-7:00pm, El Instituto, Ryan Bldg 2nd floor

Nov. 20—Christina Davidson, Ph.D. candidate, Duke University, International Migration and Human Rights. 5:00pm-7:00pm, Wood Hall Basement

Nov. 21—Yana Brugal, cultural researcher, "Rito y su representación multidisciplinaria. Cruce de lenguajes en la cultura caribeña." 3:30pm-4:45pm, PRLACC, Student Union, 4th floor

December

Dec. 4—HACHA: 5:00pm-7:00pm. El Instituto, Ryan Bldg, 2nd floor

Newsletter Edited and Designed by: Yesha Doshi, Eileen Victory, Kevin Irizarry, and Anne Theriault