The Center is turning 90 in February 2021. We will celebrate with a panel of former directors discussing the history and future of Latin American Studies and other events. The Summer and Fall 2020 were challenging yet productive. I want to congratulate our MA students for their resilience and creativity working on their research projects during difficult and uncertain times. Differently from Ph.D. students or faculty that have more time to complete their projects, Master students do not have the luxury of extra time. Instead of going to sites in Latin America or the Caribbean they adapted their research plans and are advancing towards finishing their academic programs on time. If you want to get inspired with their ingenious responses doing research under COVID-19 please follow this link https://bit.ly/3h9x3Py.

Using Zoom and our YouTube channel the Center reached wide audiences worldwide hosting lectures and conversatorios. We had a panel of alumni on the challenges of COVID, several events on racism in the Americas, Afro-Cuir/Quare/Kuir Studies across the diaspora in the Americas, race and identity in Caribbean Literature, the Chilean plebiscite, and a dialogue with Colombian indigenous and Afro-descendant social movements, among others. On December 7, we launched the book *The Case for Degrowth* co-authored by Professor Susan Paulson.

The work of our faculty continues to gain recognition. Tim Murtha was awarded a major NASA fellowship for a project on “The Ancient Maya Landscape: Households, Settlement, and Ecology of the Lowlands”; Welson Tremura’s group "Saudades do Brasil" was selected for the 2019 award of best show/concert by the FUNDACÂO FOCUS BRASIL; and Joel Correia was nominated for the International Educator of the Year award.
Ms. Wanda Carter Retires After 19 Years at the Center for Latin American Studies
Contributed by Patricia Alba (LAS)

Over the summer, the Center for Latin American Studies bade farewell to Ms. Wanda Carter as she retired from the University of Florida. Ms. Wanda began her journey at the Center in 2001 when she joined the Tropical Conservation and Development Program as the secretary. She was promoted to the Program Assistant position in 2003. In her role, she worked under the direction of three MALAS Program Coordinators, Dr. Richmond Brown, Dr. Susan Paulson, and Dr. Carlos Suarez.

As part of her work, Ms. Wanda helped Center students from the moment they were admitted to the program until they graduated. New students met Ms. Wanda during the MALAS Orientation, where she welcomed them to the Center and provided them with much-needed information and student resources. Ms. Wanda’s dedication to the students was shown in the way they trusted and cared for her.

Beyond the student work, Ms. Wanda also worked with faculty and staff across the Center and the University of Florida. She was the point of contact for faculty that needed assistance with curriculum or course schedules, she worked with staff and awards committees, and she was always present and willing to lend a helping hand to anyone that stopped by her office.

“To me, Ms. Wanda Carter was an integral part of the Center for Latin American Studies,” said Moisés Moreno-Rivera (MALAS, 2017). “She made me feel like family. I know this with how she greeted me; with how she assisted me with bureaucratic paperwork; with how she raised concerns when I fell ill and looked out for me; with how she helped us grieve when Dr. Brown passed; with how she spoke with me in our random one-on-ones; and with how she greeted me when I returned to visit the Center years after graduating. It will be difficult envisioning the Center without Ms. Wanda Carter. I wish her all the best in her retirement!”

“Wanda was not only an excellent colleague but with her warm personality and her smile, she was able to create an ideal workplace,” said Efrain Barradas (LAS emeritus faculty).

Ms. Wanda’s dedication to the students and her exceptional work ethic was recognized in 2018 when she received a Superior Accomplishment Award from the University of Florida. After 19-years of hard work and dedication to the Center for Latin American Studies, the faculty, staff, and students at the Center wish Ms. Wanda a happy and restful retirement. Thank you for everything, Ms. Wanda!
On May 20, the UF/TCD Governance and Infrastructure in the Amazon (GIA) hosted the webinar, “Post-COVID-19: A Green and Inclusive Recovery for Latin America.” The goal of the webinar was to exchange ideas on how responses to the immediate public health and economic challenges could also incorporate considerations and actions on structural economic changes that re-evaluate current development models towards more just and sustainable development alternatives. As the COVID-19 pandemic posed a threat on every society around the globe, the actions taken by each country in Latin America to curb the spread of the virus needed to incorporate sustainable solutions.

Around 130 participants heard engaging ideas from Gabriel Quijandría Acosta, Minister of the Environment in Peru; Monica de Bolle, Senior Fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics; Gustavo Fonseca, Program Director of the Global Environment Facility; and Esteban Perez, Development Finance Coordinator, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC-UN). The webinar was moderated by Susan Paulson, a professor in the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida.

The webinar highlighted the interrelationship between economic, social, and environmental aspects of recovery and development, the important role of public development banks, and the need to provide incentives and policy levers to promote a green economy and social infrastructure. More fundamentally, Latin America needs a more integrated development model less dependent on global markets and financial flows. Several participants highlighted the important role of civil society, both in terms of elaborating proposals for alternative development pathways and to create the political support and will to implement them.

For Your Information: UF ACRONYMS

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Conversations in the Neighborhood: Let’s Talk about Food

Contributed by Alexandra Cenatus (Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere)

Conversations in the Neighborhood is a public humanities series developed by the UF Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere and led by Alexandra Cenatus. The series responds to current social issues in Gainesville, Florida, through nuanced approaches to knowledge production. Food is the theme of Conversations in the Neighborhood’s first-year series because it serves as an important vehicle through which people create social ties. In this context, the series aims to bring community members, local farmers, government officials, and humanities scholars together to discuss food issues.

Conversations in the Neighborhood use three concepts – the past, the present, and the future – to take participants into a culinary journey, allowing them to revive their food experiences and explore how past circumstances continue to impact their lives, and reflect on lessons from the present. However, the pandemic made it clear from the onset that the series had to re-adjust its programming. With brainstorming, flexibility, and patience to learn new online tools, Conversations in the Neighborhood redesigned its content to better engage with its audience on Zoom.

On September 19, Conversations in the Neighborhood launched its “past” installment with a workshop entitled Fruits of the Past, Present, and Future led by Anna Tjé, a community organizer and artist based in Paris, France. In this meeting, more than forty participants embarked on a journey to examine their relationships with fruits. In Food Memories of Latin America, the series’ second event, panelists from different parts of Latin America shared deeply personal memories of their homeland. However, their recipes are the ultimate highlight of this discussion, which we highly recommend if you want to experience new flavors.

In Suppressed Narratives: Oral, History, and Cookbooks, invited speakers explored the role museums can play in collecting cookbooks and changing Southern cuisine narratives. In Food Access: Race, Class, and the Environment, the last event of the “past” installment, panelists explored the state of food security and challenges in Gainesville, Florida.

Overall, Conversations in the Neighborhood received positive feedback. For instance, one participant said that "they felt so energized by the conversation and perspectives." On January 19, 2021, the series will begin its present installment, which will focus on connections between food availability in the Gainesville community and the larger production and distribution dynamics worldwide. And you can register for this event through this link: https://ufl.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9lVdQR3fSS2pfOJoiiEk8Lg.

2020 Charles Wood Thesis Award

The 2020 Charles Wood Thesis Award committee received an exceptionally large number of high-quality nominations. Among these, a panel of judges composed of Welson Tremura (Chair-LAS), Juan Andrade (IFAS) and Andrea Chávez (LAS) recognized the following work.


Runner Up:
We have reached a critical moment in history where we find ourselves amid a global pandemic which has yet to show signs of easing up or ceasing to wreak havoc on people around the world. However, regardless of how devastating and deadly the coronavirus continues to be, the issues regarding race, anti-Black racism, and police brutality have still managed to be at the forefront of all this pandemonium. Even in the pandemic, a multitude of protests and demonstrations have occurred throughout the diaspora after the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The way governments have responded (or not) to the coronavirus crisis has also served as an impetus for worldwide protests since Black and Indigenous peoples have continued to suffer the worse from the effects of the virus. This is not a coincidence or the fault of Black and Indigenous peoples, this reality points to a much larger issue that rests at the root of all the problems in the Americas and the Caribbean- anti Black racism, racial capitalism, and coloniality. During the summer, the UF Center for Latin American Studies kickstarted a Racism in the Americas series which consisted of four events. The center invited a myriad of professors and scholars whose work spans across multiple disciplines and examines the consequences of race and racism in different sectors of society.

The first event moderated by Dr. Carlos de la Torre held on June 16th featured two MALAS faculty members, Dr. Tanya Saunders, and Dr. Paul Ortiz. It was centered on police brutality in the Americas uncovering not only the emergence of protests throughout the diaspora after the death of George Floyd but understanding the history of the police which was founded on racist, anti-Black, and torturous principles that were designed to police and destroy Black and Indigenous lives. Ella Baker, who was an African American organizer and activist for human and civil rights once stated that if poor and oppressed people wanted to become part of a society that is meaningful, then we would have to radically change the system (Ransby, 2003).

Radical refers to digging at the root to understand the cause of a particular issue or circumstance. This event took a radical approach by examining the origins and evolution of the police, the systems that created and shaped them to be purveyors of violence, and how they maintain dominant power structures throughout the Americas. Some of the key points and highlights of the event was the emphasis of racial capitalism, chattel slavery, colonialism, and anti-Black racism being the main catalysts for the creation of the police.

The speakers also provided information about the emergence of the police during the periods of enslavement who were created to catch enslaved Africans, war with native communities over their land and protect settler colonialism. By discussing the history of the police and violence of the state, the speakers were able to help the audience understand how police violence has continued to exist throughout the centuries and how the police functions to maintain racial capitalism, imperialism, and a variety of other oppressive ‘isms’ and systems. Another crucial moment in the event was the discussion of the coloniality of gender and sexuality, which were created by and maintained through state violence and must be examined when discussing police violence.

To further examine the behavior of systemic anti-Black racism in the context of law enforcement and the police’s use of violence, the Center for Latin American Studies and the Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales IAEN held an event on October 1st entitled, La Brutalidad Policíal y los
Afrodescendientes en América Latina. The center invited speakers from across Latin America - Dr. John Anton from Ecuador, Sheila de Carvalho from Brazil, Altagracia Jean Joseph from the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and Luis Ernesto Olave Valencia from Colombia. The speakers discussed various proposals to reinvent the role of the police and other law enforcement institutions in democratic and multiracial societies. They also touched on the democratic deficits and the weakness of the State regarding the protection of human rights for African descendants and other racialized peoples.

The next event in the series held on July 1st moderated by Dr. Carlos de la Torre featured UF faculty members Dr. Christopher Busey, Dr. Carmen Martínez Novo, and Dr. Lillian Guerra. It was a discussion about Racism in the Americas which began with examining how anti-Black racism was used to create the Americas and how it explains the occurrence of various protests throughout the western hemisphere. As the panel discussed the strong presence of racism in contemporary times throughout the diaspora, their words quickly shattered the myths of racial equality/democracy and recentered the focus of various movements to uncover the presence of anti-Black racism which has been intentionally swept under the rug by those that seek to commodify moments of activism and struggle without seeking to spark radical change.

In the Caribbean and the Americas there is a tendency to declare that racism no longer exists or that it only occurs in certain areas. However, this event acted as a mirror to the issues regarding anti-Black racism that many governments and countries seek to keep hidden or cast as “things of the past”. The tendency to hide racism in the Caribbean poses many challenges and struggles, especially in the realm of activism. It is common in places such as Cuba and the Dominican Republic to deny Blackness due to the preference of identities rooted in Nationalism. However, that does not exclude the presence of racism. The event held on July 30th was focused on examining race and racism in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean to understand how race has continued to dictate the structures of society and day to day life for Black and non-Black Caribbeans. Zaire Z. Dinzy-Flores, Edwards Paulino, Ana Teresa Toro, and Dr. Chantalle Verna were the speakers at this event, which highlighted society’s harsh treatment of Black people in the Caribbean and Puerto Rico and how they deal with these issues.

All lectures and panels can be viewed on the LAS Center’s YouTube Channel:
- Police Brutality in the Americas: https://youtu.be/GeUeYoY4Mrw
- Racism in the Americas: https://youtu.be/hDroUhvnK9c
- Race and Racism in Puerto Rico & the Caribbean: https://youtu.be/zSdudpgejDc
- La brutalidad policial y los afrodescendientes en América Latina: https://youtu.be/-3vARJgYU6Q
In the discussion of their new book *The Case for Degrowth*, Giacomo D’Alisa, Susan Paulson, Giorgio Kallis and Federico Demaria examined the process of reorienting our societies from the mindset of extractivism and accumulation to an emphasis on community building and the protection of life. Their book addresses the specific ways on how to achieve degrowth in our societies. Joined by Arturo Escobar, anthropologist from UNC Chapel Hill, and Native American lawyer and activist Frank Bibeau, the talk focused on the concepts of terracide and decolonization, as well as how to apply the idea of degrowth to current indigenous resistance efforts in the United States and Latin America. The discussion began with a brief introduction from the panel members where they outlined their work related to degrowth, an overview of the book’s themes by Escobar and followed by a Q&A with members of the audience, facilitated by Demaria.

One of the questions posed was how this book differed from other works. Kallis explained how their book analyzes the problems related to economic growth from a different perspective, highlighting their focus on how Western countries sacrifice their societies and environments for minimal amounts of economic growth. Kallis also emphasized how growth under the economic model of resource extraction becomes more difficult as these resources become depleted, which in turn creates debt and austerity policies that only benefit a select, elite few. Comparing degrowth to the popular model of green growth, Kallis explained how degrowth centers around reorienting societies to slow down growth and integrates other pluriversal theories, such as feminist and critical economy and Marxist political economy.

A major theme that came up in some of the questions was the idea of how to link the idea of degrowth to Global South indigenous and feminist perspectives. Drawing from the ideology of Latin American feminists, Escobar emphasized the importance of depatriarchalization and deracialization in the process of degrowth. Additionally, Paulson offered a critique of Western feminism efforts to integrate People of Color to the capitalist system and brought up the idea of communitarian feminism, which is prominent in many indigenous communities in Latin America. She explained how at the center of communitarian feminism is the idea of the creation of life and the *buen vivir* lifestyle, not only for women but for all gender identities within the community. D’Alisa also addressed the importance of creating alliances with existing social movements in order to promote the idea of communitarian economies. He emphasized the need for degrowth to be a societal change of mindset and a project that starts from the bottom and later translates into public policy.

Towards the end of the discussion, Bibeau and Escobar discussed how degrowth can be applied to their respective contexts. Bibeau discussed the importance of creating work environments for people that allow for people to slow down, in order to work less and connect with nature. Escobar also offered an important critique of the idea of the middle class in Latin America, arguing that this model promotes individual, extractivist mentalities. He also recommended two other works to read alongside this book, *Take Back the Economy* by J.K. Gibson Graham, Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy and *The End of Capitalism (As We Know It)* by J.K. Gibson Graham.

The full panel discussion can be watched on the Center’s YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/ZpxqIDK6iLM.
Constitutional Change: Undoing Pinochet’s Legacy and Democratizing Chile

Contributed by Anthony Baxter Jr. (MALAS Student)

Although the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet ended in 1990, Chile has remained clenched within the acrimonious and unmerciful talons of the effects of his time in power and influence over the elites that still control the country’s politics and economy. The Chilean government under the Pinochet dictatorship is an exemplification of a right-leaning sabotaged government, influenced by foreign and elite interests rather than the interests of the masses. This is evident in the government’s inability to make substantial changes to the constitution to democratize Chile in recent years.

Thirty-one years have passed since the constitution was drafted under the dictatorship of Pinochet. However, the promises of reforms of that constitution have not been completely satisfied and that has translated to elite domination of the electoral process and the exacerbation of inequalities, police violence, hardship and the privatization of land and resources. The UF Center for Latin American Studies held an event on October 30, 2020 to discuss why there was a need for a constitutional referendum, how to change the constitution to better suit the potential for democratizing Chile, and the steps that could be taken to foment healing systemically, politically, and socially. Dr. Carlos de la Torre moderated the discussion while guest speakers Claudia Heiss Bendersky and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwaser offered their wisdom and knowledge about this subject.

For years, members of social movements have protested the circumstances in Chile, demanding radical changes to the constitution, inclusion in the government, and the reallocation of resources to other sectors and institutions. Their efforts led to the 2020 constitutional referendum, which concluded with most voters determining that the constitution will be abolished and redrafted. As part of the event, the panel discussed how the dictatorship affected the electoral system long after Pinochet, which remained protected by the military and a handful of elites who held seats in congress and the constitutional convention to prevent substantial changes from occurring. The non-inclusive congress and lack of support for women and indigenous communities in Chile has fueled the myriad of social movements and calls for reform.

A key highlight of the discussion while determining how Chile moves forward, is the imperativeness of including those that have been excluded by society. There is a strong need for the restructuring of power, as the speakers stated that if this doesn’t happen then the right leaning elites could continue to sway the pendulum of politics in their favor, which would fail the goals of various social movements and protests. There also needs to be a clear consensus on what type of government Chileans want moving forward, since political parties that are connected to reality and the experiences of the masses have been taboo in recent years. There is much potential in this process of democratizing Chile, with the abolishment of the old constitution being the first step. Moving forward, it will be interesting to witness how this entire process unfolds and what measures will be taken to ensure that the government is more inclusive and works for the masses, rather than against them.

The full panel discussion can be watched on the Center’s YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/5gSqDYpStlw.
On November 2, three scholars came together for a ‘conversatorio’ to discuss the United States presidential election in the context of populist experiences and governments from around Latin America. The speakers included Dr. Margarita López Maya, Bacardi Family Eminent Scholar UF Center for Latin American Studies, 2019-2020; Dr. Kurt Weyland, Mike Hogg Professor in Liberal Arts, The University of Texas, Austin; and Dr. Nadia Urbinati, Kyriakos Tsakopoulos Professor of Political Theory and Hellenic Studies at Columbia University. Center Director, Dr. Carlos de la Torre, moderated the event.

Dr. Weyland discussed President Donald Trump’s political strategy and style and how it compares to Latin American populists. He touched on the similarities between Trump and Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro, as well as Venezuela’s former president Hugo Chávez. “Essentially what you see with populism and in all these political leaders,” said Weyland, “you see a very personalistic leader [...] you have a very powerful charismatic personality that is their core and axis in everything.”

Dr. Nadia Urbinati highlighted Trump’s tendency to delegitimize various institutions in the United States, such as the press or the legitimacy of our elections. Urbinati called it an erosion of moral legitimacy rather than institutional. She stated that Trump is not a fascist, but instead he represents a factional majority in the United States. “It is a majority that occupies the place of legitimacy entirely and thus declares the other to be illegitimate.”

Dr. Margarita López Maya discussed the rise of populism in Venezuela. She stated that the strength of our democracy can often be relative. Venezuela was thought to have a strong democracy, but it was quickly eroded after Chávez came into power. “Populism became so severe in Venezuela,” said López Maya, “because the institutions were very weak. The values of democracy hadn’t been sufficiently embedded in Venezuelan institutions and in Venezuelan people.”

The event was sponsored by the UF Center for Latin American Studies, the journal Perspectives on Politics, the UF Department of Political Science, and the Center for European Studies. The full panel can be watched on the Center’s YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/zeLyXKWyr7U.
Dr. Carmen Martínez Novo, professor at the Center for Latin American Studies, was named the new editor in chief of the Latin American Research Review (LARR). This nomination marks the first time a woman has served in the position of editor in chief for the LARR since its founding in 1965. Martínez Novo’s tenure as editor in chief will start in January 2021 and end in December 2025.

The LARR is published by the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), the largest international professional association with over 13 thousand members that engage in the study of Latin America. The LARR publishes articles in the humanities and social sciences that advance research in Latin American, Caribbean, and Latina/Latino studies. Publications include articles in the fields of anthropology, politics and international relations, and more. The LARR is published four times a year in March, June, September, and December and provides immediate open access to support a broader exchange of knowledge.

Dr. Carmen Martínez Novo’s research focuses on indigenous identities, politics and rights. She is the author of *Who Defines Indigenous?* (Rutgers 2006) and *Undoing Multiculturalism* (University of Pittsburgh Press 2021), in addition to numerous articles and book chapters in national and international publications. She served as the associate editor of the *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* journal and the social sciences magazine *América Latina Hoy* (Universidad de Salamanca, Spain). She was also a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*. Throughout her career, Martínez Novo held leadership positions in the Latin American Studies Association, serving on the Executive Council from 2014 to 2016, on the Commission for Academic Freedom, and as the chair of the Ethnicity, Race and Indigenous Peoples Section.

The new editorial team for the LARR includes scholars like Dr. Lena Lavinas, senior gender and labor economist who worked for the Ministry of Planning of Brazil and was a policy analyst for the International Labor Organization; Dr. Abby Cordoba, the University of Notre Dame, who works on gender inequality, crime and violence in Central America and serves as the director of the Women in Political Science group; Dr. Hector Amaya, professor at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California; and Dr. Pavel Shlossberg, associate professor of communication and leadership studies at Gonzaga University.

The Center for Latin American Studies is honored to host the *Latin American Research Review*. The collaboration between the Center and the Latin American Studies Association includes three Center faculty that also served as LASA presidents. The Center looks forward to continuing a long-standing tradition of advancing the field of Latin American studies.
The Florida Latin American and Caribbean Diaspora Initiative at UF’s Latin American and Caribbean Collection
Contributed by Dr. Margarita Vargas-Betancourt (LACC)

In order to decolonize the archival collections at UF’s Latin American and Caribbean Collection (LACC), a team of library specialists and UF students began curating physical and online exhibits on the Latin American and Caribbean Diaspora in Florida. In 2016, they organized *The Cuban American Dream* exhibit to be featured during UF’s Center for Latin American Studies 66th Annual Conference “Cuba and the U.S. in the 21st Century.” The physical exhibit then became an online timeline that explores the universal aspects of immigration as well as the specificity of the migration of Cubans to Florida. It is now included in classes taught in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies and the Center for Latin American Studies.

The current federal administration’s intent to end the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitian nationals mobilized LACC library specialists to organize the next timeline: *The Haitian American Dream* Timeline (launched in November 2020). The project was made possible through funding from UF’s Intersections on Global Blackness and Latinx Identity, and we hope that it will be featured in the cluster of courses connected to this Intersections group. It was curated by Alexandra Cenatus (UF’s Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere), Ivanna Moreno (former ARL Fellow for Digital and Inclusive Excellence), and Dr. Margarita Vargas-Betancourt (LACC).

*The Haitian American Dream* Timeline explores questions such as what is the Haitian American Dream? How do Haitians, the Haitian government, and the U.S. conceive it? Has the dream been fulfilled? It also challenges existing narratives of Haitian migration. Both the Cuban and the Haitian timelines are Open Access and feature UF’s libraries resources. However, some of the e-books included in the latter can only be accessed by UF patrons.

The third project of the initiative is the *Documenting History: Farmworkers in Florida during COVID-19* funded by UF’s Center for Arts, Migration and Entrepreneurship in 2020. The project seeks to create an archive of snapshots of relevant digital content that capture the impact that COVID-19 is having on Florida farmworkers, many of whom are of Mexican, Central American, and Haitian descent. The archive will document the challenges that COVID-19 has presented them, as well as the innovative ways in which they adapt and survive.

The Cuban and Haitian timelines began with existing documents at the George A. Smathers Libraries, whereas the *Documenting History* project marks LACC’s moving in the direction of community-driven collections.

Each online exhibit can be found via the following links:

**The Cuban American Dream Timeline:**
http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/cubanamericandream/

**The Haitian American Dream Timeline:**
http://exhibits.uflib.ufl.edu/HaitianAmericanDream/

**Grant Proposal for Documenting History: Farmworkers in Florida during COVID-19:**
https://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00011204/00001

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Virtual Exchange with the College of Education
Contributed by Anna Rodell (MALAS Alumna)

This fall 2020 semester, the LAS Outreach unit initiated a Virtual Exchange (VE) pilot project with a course in the College of Education (COE). The project was supervised by Dr. Taryrn Brown and taught by MALAS alumna and COE doctoral student Anna Rodell. The course examines education in the U.S. through lenses of social structures, institutions, and values and centers materials from Black and Latinx perspectives. The project included one synchronous session with María Laura Mecias, a language instructor in Buenos Aires, and one asynchronous session with Darwing Pérez, professor at Universidad Campeche. Dr. Mecias presented her perspectives on the purposes and decision-makers in education in Argentina, as well as key problems, and students responded with questions and dialogue. Dr. Pérez video-recorded his perspectives on key questions of power and knowledge in education, and students watched his lecture then responded with written questions and comments in a discussion board. This partnership supports the growing connections between MALAS and the COE for both Outreach and the Education in the Americas specialization. For more information about VE initiative, visit www.latam.ufl.edu/outreach/virtual-exchange.
Exploring Career Opportunities Using Language Skills During International Education Week

Contributed by Helena Lopes (MALAS Student)

As part of International Education Week and in collaboration with the Career Connections Center, the UF Center for Latin American Studies’ Outreach unit helped organize two global career events. The events’ objectives were to promote the importance of linking language and culture skills with business and the language service industry with the goal of preparing UF graduates for global careers and to share information about the Association of Language Companies (ALC) Bridge initiative.

Kathleen Diamond, a UF Alumna, led the first event titled “Leveraging Language Skills in the Job Search,” in which she shared the status of the Language Services Industry and introduced ALC Bridge’s free job-search platform. She interacted with students in attendance and explained what the language service industry is, how it can provide students with diverse career opportunities, and how to use the ALC platform to connect with employers.

The second event featured industry professionals in the session “ALC Bridge: Careers in Language Services – A Panel of Employers”. Three executives representing companies that seek global talent to perform jobs that entail a wide range of language skills and proficiencies offered details of what they are looking for from prospective hires.

Kathleen Diamond is the Founding Chair of the Association of Language Companies (ALC) Bridge and Mary Risner, a Center Associate Director is also a founding member who has been helping to build global career pathways with language at UF. The ALC bridge is a platform where you can share your resume and profile and get information on new job opportunities, internships, events, and career resources. The goal of ALC Bridge is to serve as a link between employers and job seekers with skilled language talent and for educators looking to develop student language skills for the job market.

For more information on ALC Bridge, visit www.alcbridge.org and register for free to search for job opportunities and connect with individuals in the Language Services Industry. Recordings of both sessions are available on the ALC Bridge website under events.

Virtual Exchange and Arts Practice in Antigua

Contributed by Anna Rodell (MALAS Alumna)

In March 2019, Center affiliate Dr. Heidi Powell (COTA) led a Virtual Exchange (VE) pilot project in Antigua, Guatemala, incorporating elements of “piggybacking” (Powell, 2020) to allow students to remotely join onsite projects. The project offered frameworks for instructional use and focused on everyday tech use with cell phones. Students engaged in cultural continuity through arts practice by making alfombras, or carpets of sawdust that relate to the history of Antigua and colonial occupation. Students both on site and remotely participated real-time in the making of alfombras and learning about creative cultural practices through observation and conversation.

Dr. Powell has since adapted these methods into a learning tool embedded in a VE framework, merging people, places, times, and project-based learning. Key strengths of piggybacking include using everyday tech, bridging remote and on-site participants in teaching and learning, fostering collaboration in creative and cultural learning as a form of inquiry, and making engagement decisions that are both faculty-led and student-driven. For more information about VE initiatives, visit www.latam.ufl.edu/outreach/virtual-exchange.
SUMMER & FALL 2020 GRADUATIONS

MALAS Degrees
Marcos Ramos Valdés
Thesis: The Role of Home Gardens in Creating Community Ties in La Habana, Cuba
Specialization: TCD
Advisor: Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo

Jennifer Hiddink
Specialization: in Crime, Law, and Governance
Advisor: Carmen Martinez Novo

Carmen Henrique
Thesis: Social Inclusion and Democratization in the Museum Casa Das Rosas, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Specializations: Art, Culture, and Literature; Race, Diaspora, Gender, and Sexuality
Advisor: Catherine Tucker

Graduate LAS Certificates
Aline Carrara (GPY/TCD)
Roberto Muñoz (APY)

MDP Degrees
Pierre William Blanc
Specializations: Entrepreneurship, African Studies, TCD
Advisor: Renata Serra (African Studies)

Angelica Almeyda Zambrano (LAS)

Stephanie Bohlman (SFRC)

Eben Broadbent (LAS/SFRC) Publications:

Kaira Cabañas (SAAH) delivered the inaugural live stream lecture for the second Seminário de cultura e saúde (Culture and health conference) as part of the festival Soy Loco Por Ti Juquery (Crazy for Juquery), which was organized by the Museu de Arte Osório César and the Goethe Institute, São Paulo. Cabañas’s lecture, “Modernismo psiquiatrístico: Uma história da arte do Juquery” (Psychiatric modernism: A History of Art in the Juquery Asylum), argued for the constitutive role of psychiatric patients’ creative production within the theory and exhibition of modern art in Brazil. More info here: https://www.soylocoportijuquery.com/seminario.


Awards: The UF International Center recognized Joel Correia with the following awards: 1) International Educator of the Year and 2) the 2021 Global Learning Institute. Correia also received the UF Center for Humanities and the Public Sphere Book Manuscript Review Award in support of his book project “Disrupting the patrón: Unsettling racial geographies in pursuit of Indigenous environmental justice.”

Sustainable Development Practice Certificate
Crystal Slanzi, PhD (Psychology)

FACULTY NEWS & PUBLICATIONS


Eben Broadbent (LAS/SFRC) Publications:


Max Deardorff (History)

Invited Talks: Max Deardorff was invited to give a talk titled, “Tinjacá, Tumquey y Chiquinquirá: Orígenes de una devoción indígena,” on October 28 at the Museo Colonial Santa Clara in Bogotá (Colombia).

Invited Roundtable Participation & Public Scholarship Max Deardorff participated in the roundtable titled “Historical Fact Formation and the Colonial Archives of Indigenous and Afro Descendants,” at the Colonial Studies Committee Meeting of the Conference on Latin American History in New York, on January 4th.

Carmen Diana Deere (LAS/FRE emerita)

Andréa Cabral Ferreira (SPS)
Guest Lecture Dirceu Marroquim (History PhD candidate at USP, Brazil) gave a lecture, titled “Territorialidade, Cultura e Desigualdade Social: O caso de Recife,” in our POW 4930 (Norte/Nordeste) cultural studies class on October 30th via Zoom.

Glenn Galloway (MDP)

M. Elizabeth Ginway (SPS)
Publication: In Cyborgs, Sexuality, and the Undead: The Body in Mexican and Brazilian Speculative Fiction (Vanderbilt UP, Nov, 2020). M. Elizabeth Ginway examines all these issues from a number of theoretical perspectives, most importantly through the lens of Bolívar Echeverría’s “baroque ethos,” which emphasizes the strategies that subaltern populations may adopt in order to survive and prosper in the face of massive historical and structural disadvantages.

Foucault’s concept of biopolitics is developed in discussion with Roberto Esposito’s concept of immunity and Giorgio Agamben’s distinction between “political life” and “bare life.” This book will be of interest to scholars of speculative fiction, as well as Mexicanists and Brazilianists in history, literary studies, and critical theory.

Rebecca Hanson (LAS)


Gaby Hernández (SAAH)


Bette Loiselle (TCD/LAS)

Susan Milbrath (FLMNH)

Gulcan Onel (FRE)

Susan Paulson (LAS)

Other: Paulson gave invited talks hosted by: Northwestern University, Columbia University, University of Manchester, University of Pennsylvania, University of Coimbra, University of Cambridge, University of Padua, UC Santa Barbara, Political Studies Conference, Degrowth World Conference in Vienna, Feria Internacional del Libro in Guadalajara, and Redesign for Resilience and Regeneration in Berlin.


Wagner Vendrame (Envi. Horticulture) gave a Zoom invited lecture, titled “Micropropagation of Plants” for graduate students enrolled in Plant Propagation at the Universidade Federal de São Carlos, Araras, São Paulo, Brazil on October 15th. Gave a Zoom presentation titled “COVID-19: Difficulties or Opportunities for Ornamental Horticulture?” as an invited speaker at the First Southeast Regional Meeting of Floriculture and Ornamental Plants, held at the Universidade Federal de Lavras, Minas Gerais, Brazil, on September 22nd, 2020.


Can you tell us about your current position?
I am the Deputy Commissioner for International Trade for the state of Georgia’s Department of Economic Development. We are a state agency and report directly to the governor’s office. Collectively, our mission is job creation and creating economic opportunities across the state of Georgia. Eight different divisions make up economic development, so my role is creating opportunities through export development. I lead a team of ten people in Georgia, including myself, and a team of approximately 20 people that work as contractors in foreign markets around the world. Our sole responsibility is working with existing businesses in Georgia that are looking to open up their international sales market. To build the export ecosystem in our state, we do this with local, state, and federal partners across Georgia.

What motivated you to pursue a MALAS degree?
From the time I was in middle school, I started taking Spanish classes. I had some really great teachers in middle school and high school that kept me interested in the Latin American region. I was born and raised in Oregon, so there was more of a focus on Mexico and to a slightly lesser extent, Spanish-speaking Southern America and it was just something that I wanted to build capacity in. I stuck with it through undergraduate school and studied abroad my whole junior year. When it came to graduate school, Latin America is such a robust region and not monolithic, and contains a lot of opportunities and challenges to work through. The reason I was interested in the University of Florida was because they had a really strong Brazilian studies program, which was something I wasn’t able to get in the west coast. The graduate degree was a natural extension of my K-12 studies and what I did in undergrad, and just where my personal interests lay. There were also a lot of professional opportunities related to Latin America.

What aspect of your career have you enjoyed the most?
Definitely working with and interacting with companies. We are a state agency, so we are taxpayer-funded and that allows any company that pays taxes to the state of Georgia to access our services. It opens up the possibilities of working with both small and large companies. My first week on the job in 2008 as a trade manager, I went to a technology show in Atlanta where I was trying to make contact with Georgia companies. I wanted to see if they were open to international opportunities and learn, in that narrow focus, which companies were exploring global sale opportunities. I shadowed one of my colleagues who had a client meeting with a company that had developed an enzyme to clean out grease traps in commercial restaurants. This company had five employees, all this IP, and patents for these enzymes. It turns out they had this really efficient cleaning...
technology for commercial kitchens, and they were interested in licensing technologies around the world.

That’s when it really came home to me, when you are in graduate school, you don’t have an idea what companies are actually working on and what has international potential. So for me, the best part of my job is getting to learn about all the cool and sometimes random stuff that is going on in the state of Georgia and interacting with those companies, and being able to provide some services that truly help them grow. On a day-to-day basis, it is gratifying to help them gain those corporate skills and assist them in growing. I also appreciate that there is a constant churn of companies coming in, so there are always new companies.

How did your MALAS degree impact your career prospects?
I thought coming out of my degree that I was specifically going to focus on Latin America. I remember defending my thesis in December 2007 and starting my job search in 2008, which in Florida the economic situation was already complicated with the recession. I thought I wanted to focus exclusively on Latin American business opportunities, but I knew I didn’t want to live in Miami. I looked at research jobs, market intelligence jobs related to Latin America, and teaching assistant positions at other Latin American Studies programs across mostly the east coast. At that time, Atlanta, Georgia was making a play at being the northern hub of Latin American business. There was something called The Summit of the Americas, and Atlanta was going to be the headquarters of the US States that I never thought of working or living in were leveraging their connections and working to become hubs for Latin American businesses. As I started to get more heavily involved in the interview process, my background wasn’t as important. The knowledge content wasn’t as important and employers were looking for specific skill sets: critical thinking, research, independent work, things that you learn in a graduate program.

In terms of content, almost all the interviews I had said they could train and teach in the specifics needed for the role. When I interviewed with the Department of Economic Development, they didn’t want me to be a region specialist. They wanted me to be global because we work with companies to see where they would like to go globally. When I started, they asked me to be broadly focused but once I got into the job and everyone recognized that I did have this significant skill set in that region, then the opportunities started to come to me concerning Latin America. The focus of the MALAS degree wasn’t as important as the skills learned as a graduate student to get in the door but once in the job, you become this magnet that everyone recognizes because you do have this niche knowledge that could help in different pursuits.

What advice would you give students as they pursue their MALAS degree?
For me, my heart was with business, but also the sociological underpinnings and that human and cultural connection that drives business culture and business opportunities. I really tried to reach out in my coursework. I took a great class about the drug trade in Colombia, the history of Latin American politics, environmental studies, broadening my coursework to get a more comprehensive view of what is actually going on in Latin America. From a business perspective, all of those seemingly outlying issues do come into play. Maybe not all day every day but they contribute to a business environment and culture that makes a difference if you are trying to successfully do business in a region. Take advantage of all the content. I took a global legal class where when we began, we started by not speaking the same language at all but over the course of the semester we began to communicate more. You could go deep in your own personal and professional interests or you can use graduate school to round out your education. For me, it was great to go abroad so I wasn’t always in class with like-minded people. I enjoyed the diversity.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience in the MALAS program?
I alluded to it earlier, but I believe there was more I could’ve done to leverage my degree early on in the job search. Economic development is relationship-based as well as building out and maintaining a strong network, and I really didn’t lean heavily on the Florida Alumni network in my initial job search. If I could do it over again, I would do that differently. I tried to do it on my own, and now that I am a professional I am more connected to the University of Florida infrastructure. In terms of leveraging the degree when you get into the interview process, spend time thinking about how diverse a skill set you have. Spend some time thinking about what your graduate degree outside of the classroom is doing for you. How does it widen your viewpoint, seek out new opportunities, and get out of your comfort zone. As an employer, that worldly experience, that diversity, those other interests and pursuits, that independent working, research knowledge, knowledge in teamwork, knowledge with dealing with difficult people, all those skills that you amass in your MALAS degree are what employers are looking for. They are looking for soft interpersonal skills just as much as technical qualifications.
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The Center for Latin American Studies would love to hear from our alumni! Please complete our Alumni Update Form online at: https://bit.ly/3s5H2KA and let us know what you’re up to! If space permits, we will include your update on our next newsletter.

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