

# LA/W/S Newsletter

## CHAIR'S NOTE

Welcome back. The brand-new academic year finds us as a university community and society in challenging times. We read and hear on the news everyday about continued practices of family separation, persistent questioning about who can be considered an "American," and acts of horrific violence that target innocent and vulnerable people. It is very easy to lose hope in our common humanity these days. One way to keep and strengthen our vision of a common humanity is education: to read the stories and histories of other places and peoples and to know their languages and cultures. Our courses and events provide pathways to this education.

Last Spring semester, we had some great events on campus. Juan Carlos González Espitia, faculty member at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, gave a talk entitled, "On Syphilis, Orchestrations, and Other Imported Goods: Trademarks in the Infirm Writings of Silva and Casal," on March 20, 2019. Drs. Ugarte and Silva arranged the talk, and thirty people attended. See photo above. On March 26, 2019, Dr. Allison invited University of Scranton alumnus John Donaghy '70, Ph.D., to give a talk entitled, "Rural Honduras: Poverty, Faith, & the People." Forty-five people attended this talk. Sponsors and collaborators for both these events included the Ellacuría Initiative, the Departments of Political Science and World Language & Cultures, and the Humanities Initiative. Learning the literature and life-stories from other countries can create community on many levels.

For this semester, we have the Latin American Studies Film Festival, which focuses on music in Latin American films. Also, we will have Cristina Rivera Garza visit our campus to give a reading and lecture on September 11, 2019. Please see page two of this newsletter for more details about all of these events. Finally, we get to welcome back Dr. Aiala Levy, Department of History, who has been away for a year on fellowship at Princeton University. Read more about her and her work this past year on the last page of this newsletter. Have a great semester everyone!

-Susan C. Méndez, Chair of Latin American & Women's Studies



## WS DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It is always energizing, and humbling, to hear from a University alumna or alumnus who is proud to be a U of S Women's Studies graduate. I recently heard from such an alumna, who wrote: "I am not sure if an email could appropriately convey the impact that the Scranton Women's Studies program had on me. I owe so much of who/what I am today to that program, the faculty who shaped/taught me, and the friends who I had the opportunity to learn alongside. Thank you so much for being a large part of that."

This alumna is the director of Sexual and Interpersonal Violence Prevention & SUNY's Got Your Back program. She contacted me to share the announcement for two positions with SUNY, for which she thought recent U of S Women's Studies graduates would be qualified. With the value of higher education being challenged by so many today, higher education institutions are pressed to provide evidence of the effectiveness and value-added of their curricular programs. It is not always easy from an alumna or alumnus certainly validates the value of higher education. Clearly, the U of S Women's & Gender Studies program is effective and of value to our students. Brief notes from graduates show us that they are living their lives as women and men with and for others.

-Jean Harris, Women's and Gender Studies Director



## LAS FALL FILMS

### Music in Latin America

*All films take place in Brennan 228 at 7:00 PM*

#### **SEPT. 12: *Chico and Rita* (Cuba/Spain 2010)**

Chico is a dashing piano player and Rita is an enchanting and beautiful Havana nightclub singer. An animated love story starring the music, culture, and people of Cuba.

#### **OCT. 17: *Tropicália* (Brazil 2012)**

A feature-length documentary. This film investigates the cultural movement dubbed *Tropicália*, which began in Brazil during the 1960s as a reaction to the popular music and nationalism of the period.

#### **NOV. 21: *Violeta went to Heaven* (Chile 2011)**

A biography film. It is a portrait of famed Chilean singer and folklorist Violeta Parra filled with her musical work, her memories, her loves, and her hopes.

## **Cristina Rivera Garza Speaks on Campus**



With support from the Humanities Initiative, Dr. Yamile Silva has invited Cristina Rivera Garza, Distinguished Professor in Hispanic Studies and Director of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Houston, to give a talk entitled, "A Domestic Archaeology of Repatriation" on September 11, 2019. This talk will be about the deportation of the speaker's grandparents in the 1930s and their return to Mexico. The author will trace her grandparents' journey through the remains of domestic objects such as dishes, clothing, and furniture. The time and location is 5:30pm at TDC 405. She will also be reading her creative work later that evening at 7:30pm in the same room, TDC 405. Sponsors also include the Departments of World Languages & Cultures, English & Theatre, and LAWS.

## **NEW Leadership Summer Institute**

This June, I had the pleasure of representing the University at the NEW Leadership Summer Institute, hosted by the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University. The week long program immerses college women in opportunities for growth in political leadership and public service. We had incredible experiences meeting female members of the Pennsylvania state legislature, learning about lobbying, and enjoying networking luncheons and dinners with leaders in politics from PA and around the country. At the end of our week, we completed a mock joint-commission meeting on climate change.



Although I have always been interested in politics, I was unsure of how I would contribute to the program as a nursing major among a sea of political science majors. I was nervous about the depth and breathe of my knowledge of relevant topics. However, I learned from speakers, educators, and peers about the vital role nurses play in lobbying for healthcare reform, an issue about which I am particularly passionate. Additionally, I discovered that several of our U.S. congresswomen are nurses!

I'm not sure that I will follow in the footsteps of nurse-congresswomen; however, through NEW Leadership I learned I can be a politically-engaged leader, even if I don't run for elected office. I will forever cherish my memories from this program, and credit it for my enhanced confidence in my leadership abilities.

-Emma de Bellegarde, Nursing major

## Women's Stories and Sexuality: Shining a light in Scranton



My hope in bringing Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* to campus was not to entertain an audience, but to create a space for women to feel seen, heard, and validated. I strived to do this from the beginning stages of casting leading up to the performance. Through group discussions and educational presentations, I hoped to cultivate an open community of women in the cast and crew who would translate their passion for issues presented in the Monologues to the stage.

Though the original text was written two decades ago, the themes and issues presented deeply resonated with each member of the cast in a different way. Each cast member was able to empathize with her character because she could see aspects of her own identity represented. During our group discussions, members of the production expressed gratitude that something like the monologues was finally being done on campus because they felt that it validated their experiences as women on the University's campus.

The performance itself garnered more campus attention and support than I initially anticipated. There were over 100 students, faculty, and family members in attendance. The audience seemed engaged and entertained throughout the entire performance, and helped to raise over \$800 for the Women's Resource Center. At the end of the performance, audience members filled out an audience participation survey that attempted to gauge their emotional response to the production. The survey results revealed five major themes: education, creating space, empowering women, filling a need, and opening dialogue.

I sought to create the Women's Stories and Sexuality course with my professor and to do the work that we did last spring semester to shine a light on women's issues and narratives in this campus community. I believe that there is still a long way to go in making this campus a place where students of all identities feel accepted and validated, but all progress starts slow. Empowering students to share their own narratives is the first step in creating a culture where those narratives are understood and embraced.

-Colleen Boyle, Communication major and Women's & Gender Studies concentration

## WGS Faculty at Work

Dr. Marzia Caporale

Presented "When the Subaltern Speaks: Overcoming Otherness in Darina Al Joundi's Theater," at the MLA International Symposium

Dr. Josephine Dunn

Over ten years of researching women's history in NEPA supports her Spring 2020 course "Finding Women in Local History"

Dr. Ileana Szymanski

Is the Invited Keynote Speaker for the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy's meeting this October 2019

Dr. Billie Tadros (WGS) &

Dr. Ana Ugarte (LAS)

Won an NEH Grant to develop a Health Humanities Concentration



# Bridging Architecture and the Humanities at Princeton



Students examining the Architecture and Urbanism School at the University of São Paulo (FAU USP), designed in 1961 by João Batista Vilanova Artigas.

What do we learn about cities when we bring together architects and the humanists? This question is at the heart of the Princeton Mellon Initiative in Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities <<https://arc-hum.princeton.edu/>>, one of many such initiatives supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The question is also an urgent one; today, more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas and cities disproportionately affect global economic systems, political trends, and intellectual and creative production. How, then, does our understanding of cities change when we consider carefully the built environment, that is, the subject of architects, but from the perspective of multiple disciplines?

During the 2018-2019 academic year, I joined faculty and students in pursuing these questions at the Princeton Mellon Initiative. As a visiting fellow, my primary responsibility was to advance research projects relevant to the Initiative's aims. In my case, this meant transforming my University of Chicago dissertation into a publishable book, *Making the Metropolis: Theaters and the Urban Public in São Paulo, Brazil, 1854-1924*. The book examines how, in rapidly urbanizing São Paulo, a wide range of residents used theaters to claim their place within a nascent mass society. At Princeton, I amassed (and read) books from the library's impressive collection, sampled digitized periodicals, and marked up, deleted, and re-wrote a substantial part of the original manuscript. Along the way, I received feedback on chapter drafts at departmental workshops, published a few findings in the Spring 2019 issue of *Latin American Theatre Review* <<https://muse.jhu.edu/issue/40773>> (available for download through the Weinberg Memorial Library), and presented other conclusions as part of the Princeton Mellon Initiative's research forum, whose Fall 2019 theme was "Gender, Justice, Urbanism."

The forum presentation led me down the path of a second project, *Afro-Paulistano Cartographies*. With a grant from Princeton's Center for Digital Humanities, I hired a team of undergraduates to read São Paulo's "black press" and compile a database of public spaces accessible to Paulistanos of African descent in the decades following emancipation (Brazil fully abolished slavery in 1888). I hope to continue to work with students on this project while at Scranton. I also hope, more broadly, to share with students the joy and significance of thinking with the built environment. Co-teaching an interdisciplinary architectural studio, with architect Mario Gandelsonas, reminded me how invigorating architecture can be—especially when experienced firsthand as part of a Fall Break course trip to São Paulo! Whether studying Latin American history or gender, space, like time, is a variable we cannot ignore.

-Aiala Levy, Ph.D., Departments of History and Latin American & Women's Studies