

La crónica/A crônica

The newsletter of the Latin American & Latinx Studies Program at
The University of Scranton



Contents

<u>DIRECTOR'S NOTE</u>
<u>FACULTY UPDATES</u>
<u>STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS</u>
<u>GRADUATING STUDENTS</u>
<u>EVENTS</u>
<u>SPANISH CULTURAL SOCIETY</u>

Director's Note

Aiala Levy, PhD

Welcome to the first issue of *La crónica / A crônica*, the newsletter of the Latin American and Latinx Studies Program! This inaugural issue marks two exciting changes. First, Latin American Studies has expanded its name, adding "Latinx" to formally acknowledge the hemispheric work that our faculty and students do. We are working hard to incorporate the Latin American diaspora into our programming and curricular offerings. The second major change is the discontinuance of the Latin American and Women's Studies Department. Beginning in Fall 2022, LALS will operate independently from but certainly in collaboration with the program in Women's and Gender Studies.

As LALS embarks on this new journey, and I embark on my second year as program director, we will be focusing on strengthening community ties, both within the program and with the campus and city that house us. We have already taken several strides toward that end, establishing during 2021-2022 what we hope to be annual traditions. LALS kicked off the academic year with a Concentrator's Charla, inviting concentrators to meet one another and discuss the program over lunch. We also spearheaded the first ever South Side Restaurant Tour in October and El Carnaval in April.

Throughout, LALS has continued its commitment to enhancing intellectual life on campus through high-quality teaching, mentoring, and co-curricular programming.

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LALS Associate Faculty

Aiala Levy, PhD

LALS Program Director
Assistant Professor, History

Michael Allison, PhD

Professor, Political Science

Roxana Curiel, PhD

Assistant Professor, Spanish

Susan Mendez, PhD

Professor, English & Theater

Yamile Silva, PhD

Professor, Spanish

Janice Voltzow, PhD

Professor, Biology

LALS Affiliate Faculty

Ovidiu Cocieru, PhD

Assistant Professor,
Management, Marketing, and
Entrepreneurship

Will Cohen, PhD

Professor, Theology and
Religious Studies

Michelle Maldonado, PhD

Interim Provost

Habib Zanzana, PhD

Professor, Spanish and Arabic

LALS Staff

Donna Rupp

Department Secretary

Erika Aguilar '23

Katia Ramirez '22

2021-2022 Work-study Students
La crónica editors, contributors

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Dr. Jay Sosa, Assistant Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Bowdoin College, joined us virtually in December for a public lecture and in-class visit on politics, gender, and sexuality in contemporary Brazil. Additionally, our graduating concentrators have all conducted research under the guidance of LALS faculty. We are proud of their accomplishments and look forward to someday sharing their future achievements in this newsletter!

In the meantime, I invite you to read more about our graduating seniors, faculty, and events in the pages that follow. Many thanks to Erika Aguilar '23 and Katia Ramirez '22, our amazing work-study students and concentrators, for contributing content to this newsletter, and especially to Katia for the newsletter's creation and design.

Faculty Updates



Dr. Roxana Curiel, Spanish

In January, Dr. Roxana A. Curiel presented her paper, "Illegible Lives: Blackness, Indigeneity, and Femme Bodies in Mexico" in the Race and the Aesthetics of Refusal in Contemporary Latin America/Hemispheric Americas panel at the Modern Language Association convention in Washington, D.C. The Summer Research Grant she received last year at the U of S funded this project. In addition, Dr. Curiel and her colleagues, Dr. Shantee Rosado from Rutgers University, Dr. Prisca Gayles from the University of Nevada, Reno, and Dr. Sarah Bruno from Duke University, will present the panel "Embodying Race and Performing Blackness in Las Américas: A Black/Latinx Feminist Cypher," for the 2022 Annual American Studies Association meeting.

In February, Nancy Cázares and Dr. Curiel organized and led the virtual event "Drag King sin fronteras," along with her drag collective, ManaDrag King in Mexico City. The discussion included drag king/queer performers and activists from the U.S., Argentina, Nicaragua, and different places across Mexico. Dr. Curiel also turned in the

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Faculty Updates

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manuscript of her chapter "(Un)Documented Narratives: Immigration Enforcement, Trauma Porn, and Migration Stories." This work is part of the forthcoming edited book, *The Latinx Experience: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, under contract with Sage Publishing (2022).

Moreover, with the support of the Faculty Success Program of the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD), sponsored by the Provost, she is currently working on a paper entitled "De la Roma a Juchitán: Intimacies and Colonial Gaze in Alfonso Cuarón's *Roma* and Graciela Iturbide's Photography," to be submitted to the *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* this summer. This work is part of her book manuscript, *Machorras: Embodying Identity Against Mexicanidad*.

The most important thing that Dr. Curiel did over the past year was to get visa approval to visit her family in Mexico City for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began. She spent the holidays with her dogs, parents, aunts, and abuelita. She ate many tacos al pastor and was amazed to see her city respecting all the COVID sanitary restrictions in an unpolarized and collaborative environment.



**Dr. Janice Voltzow,
Biology**

Dr. Janice Voltzow is the Department Chair of Biology. She is also the Director of the Magis Honors Program in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Here is what she has to say about the Magis Program: "This year we took on a bumper crop of 20 first-year students. Fortunately, our 20 returning students have helped make them feel welcome and mentored them through the first stages of finding a research topic and a research advisor. Our seminars on Thursday evenings are lively and thought-provoking!"

Dr. Voltzow has also been working on research this year. She writes, "I completed a major book chapter on the structure and function of abalone, a beautiful (and delicious) marine snail whose mother-of-pearl shell is used in jewelry and whose meat is a delicacy in sushi and other cuisines around the world. Some species live in Baja California, Mexico; the Galápagos, Ecuador; and Cocos Island, Costa Rica." The chapter draws from over 200 scientific papers from the international scientific literature and includes Dr. Voltzow's own pen and ink drawings!

Finally, Dr. Voltzow shares that this spring break she returned to Puerto Rico, where she and her husband had lived for 10 years. "It was wonderful to reconnect with old friends and former students," she notes. "Although we saw hopeful signs of recovery, there is still much damage from Hurricane Maria and the series of earthquakes the island suffered over the past few years."

Faculty Updates

Dr. Susan Méndez, English & Theater

Since May 2021, Dr. Méndez has been busy publishing two articles: "Ghosts in Nelly Rosario's *Song of the Water Saints* and Angie Cruz's *Soledad*," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, 67 (March 2022); and "Love & Social Justice in Ana Castillo's *Peel My Love like an Onion*," *Chiricú Journal: Latina/o Literatures, Arts, and Cultures*, 6:1 (Fall 2021). She was also accepted to present at the University of Notre Dame this coming July on the topic, "Self-care for whom? Or Whose Self-care?: Readings from contemporary US Latinx Literary Texts," at the Latina/o Studies Association's conference, "Centering Blackness, Challenging Latinidad."

Dr. Yamile Silva, Spanish

Much to our envy, Dr. Silva has been on sabbatical this past year! During Spring 2022, she has been conducting research at the Biblioteca de Cataluña, collecting Abigail Mejía's newspaper articles published during her stay in Barcelona. Mejía (1895-1941), a schoolteacher, poet, essayist, novelist, and feminist, was one of Latin America's most prolific writers during the first part of the twentieth century.



Dr. Silva has also been busy writing, editing, and presenting. She edited a forthcoming volume of Mejía's *Entre Frivolidades* and is coeditor, with Ana María Díaz (Oberlin College) of the June 2022 issue of *Revista de Estudios de Género y Sexualidades/Journal of Gender and Sexuality Studies*. Dr. Silva has a forthcoming article, "Narrativas de lo gótico en «La extraña» (1922) de Abigail Mejía" in *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*. In November 2021, she presented on Mejía at the XXX Congreso de la Asociación de Estudios de Género y Sexualidades (AEGS) in the Dominican Republic.

As a member of the Executive Committee Board of the Colonial Section of the Latin American Studies Association, she chaired and organized panels at both the 2021 and 2022 LASA conferences, as well as co-organized a virtual seminar in March on the Inquisition in Mexico and the Philippines.

During Fall 2021, Dr. Silva participated in the NEH-AHRC (UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council) Spanish Paleography and Digital Humanities Institute, learning more about open-source tools to facilitate collaborative research and visualize data in colonial texts. The rate of acceptance to this Institute was 10%. ¡Felicidades!

In addition, Dr. Silva served as a proposal reviewer for Routledge | Taylor and Francis Group during Summer 2021, a doctoral dissertation reader and guest instructor at the Universidad de Oviedo, and peer reviewer for the academic journal *Cuadernos de Literatura* of the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, Colombia.

Faculty Updates



Dr. Aiala Levy, History

During Summer 2021, Dr. Levy published “‘Art, Luxury, Elegance’: Crafting an Aesthetic of Aspiration in São Paulo’s Early Cinemas,” which formed part of a multidisciplinary, special issue of the *Journal of Global South Studies* that she coedited with Daniel Gough and Joseph Jay Sosa. The three co-wrote the issue’s introduction, “Experimental Urbanity in São Paulo.”

She has also spent the year conducting research for a second book and digital project, *Afro-Paulistano Cartographies: Race and Space in a Post-Emancipation City*, with the assistance of LALS concentrator, Katia Ramirez '22. Through an independent study course and with the support of a Research as High Impact Practice (rHIP) Grant, they built a database of urban sites referenced in São Paulo’s “black press,” 1912-1930 (see p.6 for more on Katia’s research).

In Fall 2021, Dr. Levy redeveloped HIST 213 Gender and Family in Latin America, adding transnational, hemispheric, and transgender perspectives. Dr. Levy has continued to collaborate with the Multicultural Center on co-curricular assignments, such as Festival of Nations presentations in HIST 126 Modern Latin America.

Dr. Levy gave the keynote speech at the 2022 regional competition of National History Day, pointing out that few high school students in the US are taught Latin American history—and that there’s much we can learn from it! Finally she is keeping busy by contributing to the website and presentations of the Institutional Black History Committee of the University’s Council on Diversity and Inclusion. Read more at www.scranton.edu/rememberingblackness.



Dr. Michael Allison, Political Science

Dr. Allison has been working on several research projects since May 2021, including a U.S.-Latin American Relations textbook (with Greg Weeks, Cambridge), a book chapter on Guatemala in *Latin American Politics and Development* (edited by Harvey F. Kline, Christine J. Wade, Howard J. Wiarda, Routledge), and a book chapter on the Guatemalan left (edited by Omar Sanchez-Sibony,

Rowman and Littlefield).

Dr. Allison has also provided expert witness testimony in nearly two dozen asylum claims involving Salvadoran and Guatemalan nationals. He worked on several of these with LALS Concentrators Crysta O'Donnell '22 and Isaiah Livelsberger '22. As part of his asylum work, Dr. Allison gave a presentation on country conditions in El Salvador for a webinar sponsored by the Children’s Immigration Law Academy (CILA) of the American Bar Association.

Student Accomplishments

LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN AREA STUDIES (LACAS) UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE, SUNY BINGHAMTON

"Breaking Down Walls: Research, Resistance, and Power"

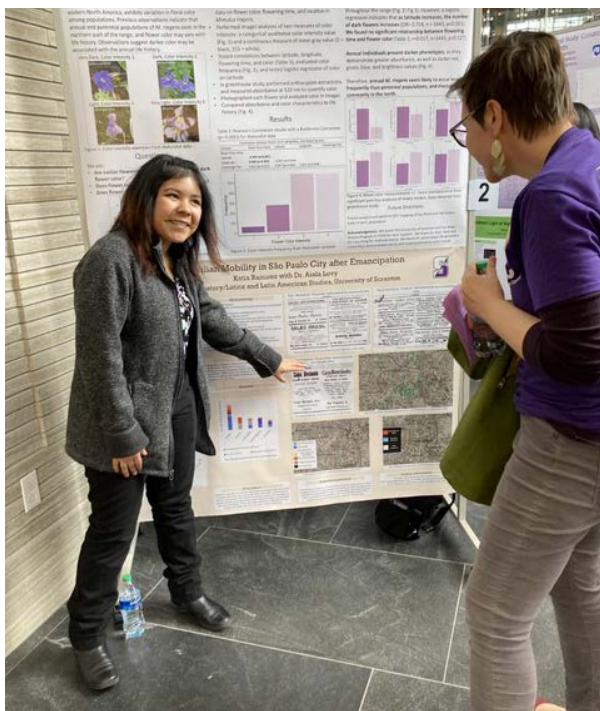
April 9, 2022

LALS concentrator Katia Ramirez '22 presented research that she did in collaboration with Dr. Levy on the mobility of Afro-Brazilians in the city of São Paulo after emancipation using advertisements from the *imprensa negra* (Black Press). She geolocated businesses advertised in the periodicals to draw conclusions about where Black Brazilians were expected to consume.



CELEBRATION OF STUDENT SCHOLARS, UNIV. OF SCRANTON

April 27, 2022



At the University's annual Celebration of Student Scholars, Katia Ramirez was able to present her research to the Scranton community alongside other University students. She explained the history of Brazil and São Paulo to set the stage for her research, and showed examples of advertisements in the Black Press.

LALS concentrator Isaiah Livelsberger '22 joined Katia, presenting two projects: "Judicial Reform in El Salvador and Guatemala: Challenges from the Peace Agreements to the Present" and "The Immigrant Scapegoat: Girardian Mimesis in Contemporary Political Discourse and Decision-Making."

Spotlight on Graduating Latin American and Latinx Studies Concentrators

Isaiah Livelsberger



Class: 2022

Pronouns: They/He

Majors: International Studies and Philosophy

Minor: Spanish

Honor Societies: Phi Sigma Tau (Philosophy Honor Society), Alpha Sigma Nu (National Jesuit honor society).

Extracurricular activities: ESL tutor volunteer, Center for Services and Social Justice, Vice President of The University of Scranton Social Justice Club.

Plans after graduation: A year of service at Kino Border Initiative, a binational organization that seeks to "help make humane, just, workable migration between the U.S. and Mexico a reality."

Spotlight on Graduating Latin American and Latinx Studies Concentrators

Crysta O'Donnell



Class: 2022

Pronouns: She/Her/Ella

Majors: International Studies and
Hispanic Studies

Minor: French

Honor Societies: Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society), Alpha Mu Gamma (Foreign Language Honor Society).

Extracurricular activities: President of the Spanish Cultural Society, Spanish and ESL tutor

Plans after graduation: "I was accepted for the Fulbright position in Andorra. I'm excited to spend the 2022-23 academic year in Andorra teaching English to students aged 12 to 18. In the future I hope to become a U.S. diplomat and work in public diplomacy."

Spotlight on Graduating Latin American and Latinx Studies Concentrators

Katia Ramirez



Class: 2022

Pronouns: She/Her/Ella

Majors: History and Hispanic Studies

Honor Society: Alpha Mu Gamma (Foreign Language Honor Society)

Extracurricular activities: Vice President of the Spanish Cultural Society, volunteering at the Leahy Clinic as a translator, Spanish and ESL tutor

Plans after graduation: "I will be attending grad school at Georgia State University, pursuing a Master's in Spanish. Hopefully, after my MA, I would like to get a PhD, but I'm still unsure in what."



Events - Fall 2021

FALL 2021 FILM SERIES: FAMILY TIES IN LATIN AMERICA

Viva (September 21)

On September 21 at 7:00pm in Brennan 228, LALS hosted a showing of *Viva*. The movie is about a drag queen named Jesus. He clashes with his estranged father when his dream of performing comes true. However, his life is soon turned upside down when his father returns into his life. The two men struggle with opposing expectations of each other.



Zona Sur/Southern District (October 26)

LALS screened *Zona Sur/Southern District* on October 26th. The movie showed a family's matriarch struggling in the society of Bolivia. The filming and camera work of this particular film was certainly different than others, and as such, provided the audience a captivating look into the family's dynamics.



XXY (November 16)

The final showing for the film series took place on November 16th. *XXY* follows the story of an intersex fifteen-year-old named Alex who lives in Uruguay. They struggle with their identity throughout the film. Their mother is disapproving while their father is more supportive. Alex goes through a painful process of self-discovery.



Events - Fall 2021



OPEN HOUSES

Latin American Studies hosted a booth on the Dionne Green to promote the program. Assisting Dr. Levy were LALS concentrators Katia Ramirez and Erika Aguilar, who beautifully decorated the table and enthusiastically shared with passersby their experiences in the concentration.

DR. JAY SOSA

On December 9, 2021, LALS cosponsored with the Women's and Gender Studies Program a public Zoom lecture by Dr. Jay Sosa (Assistant Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Bowdoin College). The talk, titled "Unstable Analogies: LGBT Anti-Discrimination Law in Brazil and the (Non) Intersectionality of Human Rights," discussed Brazil's LGBT+ campaign for anti-discrimination legislation and its failed attempt to broaden beyond racism the legal category of discrimination. On December 8, Dr. Sosa virtually facilitated in Dr. Levy's HIST 213 Gender & Family in Latin America a discussion of his article on sexist politics in Brazil, "Subversive, Mother, Killjoy: Sexism against Dilma Rousseff and the Social Imaginary of Brazil's Rightward Turn," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 44, no. 3 (2019): 717-41).



UNSTABLE ANALOGIES

LGBT Anti-Discrimination Law
in Brazil and the (Non)
Intersectionality of Human Rights

Dr. Jay Sosa, Bowdoin College



SOUTH SIDE RESTAURANT TOUR

With the support of the Multicultural Center, Office of Community Relations (OCR), Spanish Cultural Society, and United Neighborhood Centers (UNC), LALS launched the first ever South Side Restaurant Tour on Saturday, October 2. The event offered students the chance to stroll through the South Side and sample two Latinx restaurants from the following: Italo's, Chicano's, La Chingada, and La Libertad Pupuseria. After visiting the restaurants, students finished up with desserts from Florita's Bakery in the UNC community room. The tour also included \$5 Market Bucks to spend at the South Side Farmer's Market. Students only paid \$10 for all this! Participants stated in a post-attendance survey that they would like to see the event happen again. We're already working to make that happen! The next page contains pictures of the South Side Restaurant Tour.

SOUTH SIDE RESTAURANT TOUR - PHOTOS



Events - Spring 2022

SPRING 2022 FILM SERIES: THE HANDS OF JUSTICE

February 24.

*No más bebés / **No More Babies***

March 24.

*La odisea de los giles / **Heroic Losers***

April 28.

*Democracia em Vertigem / **The Edge of Democracy***

all films @ 7:00pm in Brennan 228



EL CARNAVAL

El Carnaval was an event that took place on April 30th in the DeNaples Ballroom. Showcasing Latin American cultures, the event attracted nearly 100 participants! It was organized with the Spanish Cultural Society (SCS) and the Multicultural Center with the triple aim of introducing students unfamiliar with Latin America to its diverse cultures; providing Latinx students with a space to share and enjoy their culture in the company of peers; and promoting LALS and SCS.

Attendees were able to eat traditional Latinx food, play games like Lotería (bingo), make crafts, take instant photos in front of backdrops of Latin American locations, and even break piñatas! Photos are below.

A GOOD FARMER

Students taking Dr. Curiel's SPAN 384 Migrations Across the Americas class reflected on the play, *A Good Farmer*, performed by the University Players this spring: "We would like to state that our criticisms do not lie with the acting, performance, or work exhibited by the Players but rather are intrinsic to the play itself. We believe that while Sharyn Rothstein's purpose in writing the play was to shed light on the topic of migration, we argue that she did so in a way that was centered on the experience of the white individual rather than the migrant, contained misrepresentations, and lacked substance."

EL CARNAVAL - PHOTOS



Fall 2022 Courses - Join us!

BIOL 204 Environmental Issues in Latin America (D, E)
Dr. Voltzow . MWF 1-1:50PM

ENLT 252 Latinx Literature (CL, D, EPW)
Dr. Méndez . MWF 11-11:50AM

HIST 125 Colonial Latin America (CH, D)
Dr. Levy . MWF 10-10:50AM

HIST 215 Church and Society in Latin America (CH, D)
Dr. Maldonado . TR 8:30-9:45AM

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

Fall 2022 Courses

MGT 474 Managing a Multicultural Workforce (D, EPW) . Dr. Cocieru . TR 8:30-9:45AM

PS 219 Latin American Politics (S, D)
Dr. Allison . MWF 9-9:50AM

SPAN 311 Spanish Conversation (CF, D)
Dr. Silva . TR 8:30-9:45AM / Dr. Curiel . TR 10-11:15AM, 1:00-2:15PM

SPAN 320 Introduction to Hispanic Literature (CL)
Dr. Silva . TR 1-2:15PM

SPAN 335 Service & the Hispanic Community (D)
Dr. Curiel . TR 2:30-3:45PM

Spanish Cultural Society



The Spanish Cultural Society (SCS) is a student club at The University of Scranton that promotes and educates students about the cultures and histories of Spanish-speaking communities. You can follow their instagram page @UofS_SCS. Pictured left to right are club officers Crysta O'Donnell (LALS concentrator), Arielle Contrera, Carolina Murphy and Katia Ramirez (LALS concentrator).

We want to give a farewell to three of its graduating officers, President Crysta O'Donnell, Vice President Katia Ramirez and Treasurer Carolina Murphy. We wish you the best for your future endeavors and thank you for everything you've done! We cannot wait to see your future accomplishments.

In addition to the farewell, we want to welcome the new cabinet for 2022-2023: President Arielle Contrera, Vice President Vanessa Ryan, Treasurer Julia Brown, and Secretary Adriana Piscoya. We hope to continue collaborating with the SCS in the coming year.

Want to join the Spanish Cultural Society? You do not need to be a Spanish speaker nor of Latin American descent to join. The club is open to having people from various backgrounds who are interested in learning more about Latin America and its cultures and values! Sign up on RoyalSync!

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www.scranton.edu/academics/cas/laws/programs/latin-american/index.shtml