A RICHARD E. GREENLEAF
COLONIAL STUDIES CONFERENCE
ORGANIZED BY THE UNM LATIN AMERICAN & IBERIAN INSTITUTE

AFRICANS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS
IN THE EARLY MODERN
IBERO–AMERICAN WORLD

APRIL 18–19, 2011
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Latin American & Iberian Institute (LAII) would like to express its profound appreciation for Dr. Richard E. Greenleaf, who has so strengthened the teaching, learning, and research of colonial Latin America at the University of New Mexico and throughout the world.

“Africans and Their Descendants in the Early Modern Ibero-American World” was made possible with the generous support of Dr. Greenleaf as well as funding from the LAII’s US Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center grant.

Cover image:
Miguel Cabrera, *De negro e india, china cambuja*, 1763
Monday, April 18, 2011
All panels will be held in SUB Lobo A & B unless otherwise indicated.

9:30-10:00 a.m.
Opening Remarks and Introductions

Susan Tiano, Director, Latin American & Iberian Institute, UNM
Brenda Claiborne, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, UNM
Stanley Hordes, Research Associate, Latin American & Iberian Institute, UNM
Kathryn McKnight, Associate Director, Latin American & Iberian Institute, UNM

10:00-12:00 p.m.
Panel I: Differences and Meanings of Place Among Africans and Their Descendants in Ibero-America

María Elena Díaz, University of California, Santa Cruz (Discussant)
Henry John Drewal, University of Wisconsin, Madison (Discussant)
Ray Hernández Durán, University of New Mexico (Moderator)

12:00-1:00 p.m.
Lunch (Ballroom A)

1:00-3:00 p.m.
Panel II: Migration, Settlement, and Memories Among Africans and Their Descendants in the Ibero-Atlantic

Judith A. Carney, University of California, Los Angeles (Discussant)
Chris Duvall, University of New Mexico (Moderator)
Lorelle D. Semley, College of the Holy Cross (Discussant)

3:00-5:00 p.m.
Panel III: Blacks and the Politics of Corporate Identity in Ibero-America

Walter Hawthorne, Michigan State University (Discussant)
Anna Nogar, University of New Mexico (Moderator)
Renée Soulodre-La France, King’s University College at the University of Western Ontario (Discussant)
Tuesday, April 19, 2011
All panels will be held in SUB Lobo A & B.

10:00-12:00 p.m.
Panel IV: The Social Production of Difference and Distance and the Lived Responses to Categorization Within Black Ibero-America

Mariselle Meléndez, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Discussant)
Eleuterio Santiago-Díaz, University of New Mexico (Moderator)
Ben Vinson, III, Johns Hopkins University (Discussant)

12:00-12:30 p.m.
Closing Discussion

Kathryn McKnight, Associate Director, Latin American & Iberian Institute, UNM
ABOUT
DR. RICHARD E. GREENLEAF

A distinguished scholar of colonial Latin America, Dr. Richard E. Greenleaf has an extensive career in teaching, research, and service. He has been called “one of the most influential historians of colonial Latin America” (Schwaller, 2008) with a sphere of impact that extends across international borders.

Greenleaf’s interest in the Southwest and Latin America developed first while he was a child living on a farm beside the Rio Grande and later as a student working through three degrees at the University of New Mexico. Greenleaf obtained a B.A. in Government studies in 1953, an M.A. in Inter-American Affairs in 1954, and finally a Ph.D. in History in 1957. During this time the renowned France V. Scholes served as his notable mentor, contributing substantially to his immersion and understanding of the field (Harbert, 2006). Indeed, Greenleaf’s doctoral dissertation, “Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition, 1536-1543,” produced under Scholes’ tutelage, “served as the basis for his many excellent publications on the history of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Latin America” (Chuchiak et al, 2008).

Having studied in Mexico while writing his dissertation, it seemed a natural choice for Greenleaf to decide to move to Mexico City after graduating. He lived there for thirteen years, teaching and researching at Mexico City College, an institution now known as the University of the Américas (Quinn, 2006), as well as serving as the College’s Academic Vice-President. Throughout these years Greenleaf continued to write, gradually adding to what is now a substantial corpus of scholarly work.

In 1969, Greenleaf transitioned to Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he cemented his extensive teaching and service record while serving as Director of the Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies and as Chair of the Department of History. By the time he retired in 1998, Greenleaf had authored nearly a dozen major books, served as contributor to several more, and written over 50 articles (Chuchiak et al, 2008). Despite this impressive range of scholarship Greenleaf maintains that “The most important contributions I made were students. They say a man is known by his graduate students and where they are teaching” (Schwaller, 2008). Needless to say, Greenleaf has “served as mentor to 34 doctoral students at Tulane, and countless masters and
undergraduate students both in the United States and in Mexico” (Chuchiak et al., 2008). Recently, when UNM held a reception in honor of Greenleaf, the event drew “friends, students and colleagues from across the country and Mexico” (UNM Foundation, 2010). Such attendance is clear evidence of his enduring impact.

Since his retirement in 1998 Greenleaf has returned to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he has continued tirelessly to support the teaching, study and research of colonial Latin America at his alma mater. Greenleaf’s generous support of “Africans and Their Descendants in the Early Modern Ibero-American World” marks only the most recent contribution in his long dedication to the field.

References


ABOUT THE
LATIN AMERICAN & IBERIAN INSTITUTE

Because of the geographic location and unique cultural history of New Mexico, the University of New Mexico (UNM) has emphasized Latin American Studies since the early 1930s. In 1979, the Latin American & Iberian Institute (LAIi) was founded to coordinate Latin American programs on campus. Designated a National Resource Center (NRC) by the U.S. Department of Education, the LAII offers academic degrees, supports research, provides development opportunities for faculty, and coordinates an outreach program that reaches diverse constituents. In addition to the Latin American Studies (LAS) degrees offered, the LAII supports Latin American studies in departments and professional schools across campus by awarding student fellowships and providing funds for faculty and curriculum development. The LAII’s mission is to create a stimulating environment to produce and exchange knowledge of Latin America within and beyond UNM.
Panel Descriptions

Panel I: Differences and Meanings of Place Among Africans and Their Descendants in Ibero-America

Panel II: Migration, Settlement, and Memories Among Africans and Their Descendants in the Ibero-Atlantic

Panel III: Blacks and the Politics of Corporate Identity in Ibero-America

Panel IV: The Social Production of Difference and Distance and the Lived Responses to Categorization Within Black Ibero-America
Panel I: Differences and Meanings of Place Among Africans and Their Descendants in Ibero-America

Together people give meaning to and are defined by the geographic locations where they live, constructing a sense of place. Humans collectively create norms about what should and should not be a part of that location, whether it is a rural farm, a town center, a city market, a school, a church or a family home. Communities and societies “perform” place through everyday activities, conversations and formal discourses, establishing conventions that govern the behaviors appropriate to each place. This panel will examine the differences and meanings of place among Africans and their descendants in the Ibero-American colonial world: how they constructed and performed it, how they identified and were identified by it, and how they interacted with the norms governing the meanings of colonial places in differing ways across generations.
María Elena Díaz, University of California, Santa Cruz
“El Cobre, Cuba: Slavery, Blackness and Place”

El Cobre is a modest locality of considerable (even iconic) significance in the history of Cuba and the African diaspora in the Iberian world. This protean place has been a major copper mining settlement reliant on slave labor, a sacred place of pilgrimage in several religious traditions, and a black pueblo, the only one in Cuban history. This once important Atlantic locality has been associated to blackness in various ways and people of African descent have carved a sense of place in El Cobre in different social, cultural and political ways too. My paper focuses on the remarkable, if often controversial, reconfigurations of “place” enacted in this locality as it became a black pueblo (1670s-1830s) and the significance of place identity among the slaves and free people of color involved in this process.

Henry John Drewal, University of Wisconsin, Madison
“Signifyin’ Saints: Agency and the Arts in Afro-Brazil”

How are people’s ideas and aspirations transformed into practices and products? I consider this question using two African theories of agency – as for Yoruba-speaking peoples, and mooyo/nkisi for Kikongo-speakers – that help to explain how Afro-Brazilians were able to forge distinctive artistic worlds despite Euro-Brazilian attempts at cultural hegemony.
Panel II: Migration, Settlement, and Memories Among Africans and Their Descendants in the Ibero-Atlantic

As individuals and groups migrate from one geographical area and settle in another, they make connections between the spaces they leave and the spaces to which they travel. In these movements, they engage in processes of transculturation, selectively shedding some beliefs and practices, taking on new ones, and contributing the beliefs and practices that they bring to their new place and society. These processes of change occur within unequal relationships of power. This panel will examine the movement of Africans and their descendants around the Ibero-Atlantic world, with a particular focus on the processes of transculturation, or the diffusion and infusion of symbolic memories, political ideologies and everyday practices into American spaces, noting the particularities of experience defined by race, caste, gender, and calidad.
Judith A. Carney, University of California, Los Angeles

“Seeds of Memory: Africa’s Botanical Legacy in Tropical America”

The discussion examines the ways that African food crops circulated in the tropical Atlantic world between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Emphasis is on their role in the transatlantic slave trade, the significance of slave ships for the arrival of African foodstaples in the New World, and the sites where they were established in plantation societies. An examination of the African components of the Columbian Exchange underscores the significance of subsistence for the commerce in human beings and the agency of enslaved Africans in instigating the cultivation of familiar dietary staples.

Lorelle D. Semley, College of the Holy Cross

“Porto-Novo, Trans-African City”

Since its origins as a kingdom in the early eighteenth century, the port-city and kingdom of Porto-Novo in the modern-day Republic of Benin in West Africa featured a cosmopolitan community of diverse West Africans, Brazilians of African descent, Muslims, Europeans, and Catholics. People also sometimes identified across social and cultural markers simultaneously. In order to portray Porto-Novo’s history, I propose a new conceptual framework, “trans-African,” that broadens the time, space, and perspective of African diaspora studies to highlight the multidirectional social, cultural, and intellectual networks along which Africans and people of African descent traveled. This study of Porto-Novo forms part of a new book project on black citizenship during French colonial empire. In the context of this conference, however, perhaps Porto-Novo emerges as a place where competing and overlapping identities met in novel ways, redefining not only African history and but also the intersection of Franco-, Ibero-, and Afro-Atlantic worlds.
Panel III: Blacks and the Politics of Corporate Identity in Ibero-America

The conquest of indigenous communities and the establishment of Ibero-American colonial societies produced social and cultural turmoil, as diverse cultural groups engaged with each other in struggles for human dignity and self-determination. The formation of identity-based corporations such as confraternities, sodalities, naciones, colored militia and maroon societies among Africans and their descendants played important roles in these struggles. Africans and their descendants in Ibero-America drew on their experiences and memories of African homelands to create new group relationships in the Americas. From the corporate bodies they (re)created in the Americas emerged new and layered identities. This panel will examine the ways in which Africans and their descendants in Ibero-American societies re-created groups and group identities both within and in conflict with Ibero-American institutions.
This paper explores the nature of the spiritual beliefs of Africans from a region known as Upper Guinea. In the second half of the eighteenth century, tens of thousands of Upper Guineans were enslaved and shipped to the Portuguese territory of Brazil. The paper then explores spirituality at home and in diaspora. I argue that elements of Upper Guinean spiritual beliefs and aspects of rituals differed over space and changed over time. However, I argue that all people of the Upper Guinea coast, regardless of the community, ethnic group, or occupational group to which they belonged, held a relatively unchanging set of “core beliefs.” At home and in diaspora in Brazil, Upper Guineans who were exposed to Christianity and Islam accepted the power of priests and new spirits, but the acceptance of some things Christian did not mean the rejection of preexisting beliefs.

For Africans forced into migration to the Americas by the slave trade, lay brotherhoods provided a space where ethnic re-grouping, or ethnic re-invention might occur. Interpreted as a panacea by the slaveholding class, these brotherhoods provided sustenance, mutual aid and a space for cultural practice within the parameters of the cults of saints. We know for example, that many of the brotherhoods on the Caribbean coast were particularly devoted to the cult of San Benito of Palermo, a black saint. In the case of Nueva Granada there are tantalizing documentary traces that suggest the importance of brotherhoods for their economic roles, as well as the social and religious cohesion they manifested. This work explores the many facets of corporatism among Afro-descendientes represented through the institution of the lay brotherhood in the context of 17th and 18th century Nueva Granada.
Panel IV: The Social Production of Difference and Distance and the Lived Responses to Categorization Within Black Ibero-America

Governing bodies, religious authorities, and local land- and slave-owners created definitions of difference in the Americas, using terms such as race, caste, republic, and calidad. These differences, in turn, justified Iberian imperial and colonial projects. Groups who were subordinated by these definitions often pushed back or negotiated their relationships to the imposed categories in a fluid exchange of identity definition. From this fluidity emerged renegotiations of the meaning of the differences and distance that the Iberian colonizers attempted to impose. This panel examines how and why social relations become contextualized by structural forces and geographic contexts such that they influence and in turn are influenced by people. Specifically, this panel considers the social production of identity as an interactive process in Ibero-America among and between groups who were subordinated, as well as between subordinated groups and Iberian colonizers.
Mariselle Meléndez, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
“The Female African Body and the Production of Cultural Difference in Eighteenth-Century Peru”

My presentation examines the preoccupation of male intellectuals and contributors to the newspaper *Mercurio peruano* (1791-1795) with regard to the African female bodies, at a time when the female body was the object of intense scrutiny because it was viewed as central to the production of healthy citizens as well as social progress. The news articles and essays published in *Mercurio peruano*, specifically those devoted to issues of monstrosity, defective births, female anatomy, pregnancy, gender transformation, and education, served as discursive venues to highlight the disorders, excesses, and defects that undesirable bodies caused to the Peruvian society. I will demonstrate that the urge to examine the medical defects as well as the limitations of the female body, especially those bodies of African descent, worked as an incentive to determine the proper rules to be prescribed for those bodies in order for them to contribute to the progress of the nation.

Ben Vinson, III, Johns Hopkins University
“Interpreting Caste in Colonial Mexico”

This paper surveys some of the issues involved in understanding the Latin American caste system and its functionality in colonial Latin America. In particular, the paper focuses on the utility of examining “marginal castes” as a means of better understanding the phenomenon of caste, and quite possibly the emergence of race in Latin America. Primary attention is given to castes of African descent.
PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Judith A. Carney
Dr. María Elena Díaz
Dr. Henry John Drewal
Dr. Chris Duvall
Dr. Walter Hawthorne
Dr. Ray Hernández-Durán
Dr. Kathryn J. McKnight
Dr. Mariselle Meléndez
Dr. Anna Nogar
Dr. Eleuterio Santiago-Díaz
Dr. Lorelle Semley
Dr. Renée Soulodre-La France
Dr. Ben Vinson, III
Dr. Judith A. Carney
Professor, Department of Geography
University of California, Los Angeles

Dr. Judith A. Carney earned a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of California, Berkeley in 1986. Carney currently teaches in the Department of Geography at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she offers courses on African ecology and development, Africa and the African Diaspora, and comparative food systems. Her research interests include examining the agricultural and historical details of the connections between the Old and New Worlds, most notably focusing on The Gambia, Brazil, Suriname, and the southeastern United States.

Dr. María Elena Díaz
Associate Professor, Department of History
University of California, Santa Cruz

Dr. María Elena Díaz earned a B.A. in Art History, an M.A. in Anthropology and History, and a Ph.D. in Latin American and Caribbean History from the University of Texas, Austin. In the Department of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Díaz’s courses have included *Introduction to Colonial Latin America (1400s-1800s)*, *History of Modern Cuba*, *Women in Colonial Latin American History (1400s-1800s)*, *Slavery and Race in Latin America*, and *Race and Nation in Latin America*.

Díaz’s past work has focused on liberal discourse, popular culture and working class identities in modern Mexico. Her present work explores various aspects of the African Diaspora in Spain’s imperial world, including discourses and practices constitutive of slavery and freedom as well as issues related to early colonialism, and, under it, forms of citizenship, social identity and community formation. She has researched these and other themes in the mining town of El Cobre in eastern Cuba, an important imperial frontier in the Caribbean. Díaz has authored the book *The Virgin, the King and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford University Press, 2000), contributed chapters to additional volumes on the topic, and written countless journal articles. She is currently working on two book-length manuscripts directly and indirectly related to the locality El Cobre.
Dr. Henry John Drewal
Professor, Department of Afro-American Studies
Adjunct Curator of African Art, Chazen Museum of Art
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Dr. Henry John Drewal earned a B.A. in French and Fine Arts from Hamilton College, and two M.A.s (1968/69) and a Ph.D. (1973) from Columbia University. While in graduate school Drewal developed an interdisciplinary specialization within African studies, extending his research to include African art history, anthropology, and history, studying under Professors Douglas Fraser, Paul Wingert, Hans Himmelheber, Monni Adams, Margaret Mead, Graham Irwin, and David Scanlon. From 1973 to 1990 Drewal taught at The Cleveland State University, serving as Chair of the Art Department and founding curator of the university’s collection of African and African Diaspora Art. His curatorial works also include exhibits at the Neuberger Museum-SUNY-Purchase (1986), The Cleveland Museum of Art (1988-90), and the Toledo Museum of Art (1989).

Since 1991 Drewal has been the Evjue-Bascom Professor of Art History and Afro-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Adjunct Curator of African Art at the Chazen Museum of Art, UW-Madison. Over the years, he has published several books, edited volumes, and written many articles on various aspects of African art. He has, as well, curated numerous exhibitions of African art. Most recently Drewal edited *Mami Water: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diasporas* (Indiana University Press, 2008) and wrote the catalogue essay (2009) for *Dynasty and Divinity: Ife Art in Ancient Nigeria*, a major international traveling exhibition. He has been a Robert & Avis Burke Lecturer in Art History, Indiana University (2009), a Jerrold Ziff Distinguished Art History Lecturer, UIUC-Champaign-Urbana, a recipient of a Senior Research Fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution (2010/2011), a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship at the Bellagio Study and Conference Center (2006), a J. Simon Guggenheim Fellowship (2004), and Fulbright Scholar in Brazil and the Republic of Benin.
Dr. Chris Duvall
Assistant Professor, Department of Geography
University of New Mexico

Dr. Chris Duvall earned a B.A. in History (1994) from the University of California, Santa Cruz, an M.S. in Environmental Studies (2000) from San José State University, and a Ph.D. in Geography (2006) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 2008 Duvall joined the faculty of the Department of Geography at the University of New Mexico, offering courses that address physical geography, computer mapping, physical landscapes, food and natural resources, and the cultural and political ecology of Afro-Brazil. Bringing a background in African studies and a current involvement in cultural ecological research in Mali, Central America, and Brazil, Duvall is affiliated with the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute.

Duvall’s research interests include biogeography, cultural and historical ecology, African Diasporas, food geography, and science studies. He has published a dozen articles in peer-reviewed journals, including studies of the Atlantic World in the Journal of Tropical Geography and the Journal of Historical Geography, as well as numerous book chapters and encyclopedia entries. One of his current research projects is a study of how the introduction of African livestock management practices in Central America contributed to landscape changes during the 1500s and 1600s.
Dr. Walter Hawthorne
Professor, Department of History
Michigan State University

Dr. Walter Hawthorne earned a B.A. in History and Economics (1988) from Hampden-Sydney College, an M.A. in American History (1992) from the University of Maryland, and a Ph.D. in African History with minors in Anthropology and Latin American Studies (1998) from Stanford University. Since 2005 he has taught in the Department of History at Michigan State University, where he is Professor of African History and Chair of the History Department. His areas of research specialization are Upper Guinea, the Atlantic, and Brazil, with particular emphasis on the history of slavery and the slave trade. Much of his research has focused on African agricultural practices, religious beliefs, and family structures in the Old and New Worlds.

In 2003 Hawthorne published his first book, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400-1900* (Heinemann), which explores the impact of interactions with the Atlantic World, and particularly slave trading, on small-scale, decentralized societies. His most recent book, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade 1600-1830* (Cambridge, 2010) examines the slave trade from Upper Guinea to Amazonia Brazil. Hawthorne has also written for a range of scholarly journals, including the *Journal of African History, Luso-Brazilian Review, Slavery and Abolition, Africa, Journal of Global History,* and *American Historical Review.* He is currently writing a biography of a slave sailor and working on a British-Library funded archival digitization project in The Gambia. He is the recipient of the Endangered Archives Programme Project Grant from the British Library (2010) and a Faculty Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities (2008-2009).
Dr. Ray Hernández-Durán
Assistant Professor, Department of Art & Art History
University of New Mexico

Dr. Ray Hernández-Durán earned a B.A. in Psychology (1988) and a B.F.A. in Studio Art and Art History (1990) from the University of Texas at Austin, an M.A. in Art History (1994) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a Ph.D. in Art History (2005) from the University of Chicago. Since 2003, Hernández-Durán has taught Ibero-American Colonial Arts and Architecture with the Art & Art History Department at the University of New Mexico. He is affiliated with the UNM Latin American and Iberian Institute, Latin American Studies, and the Colonial Studies Working Group. He is currently on the LAII Operations committee and on both the national AP Art History Development committee and the AP Art History Curriculum Review committee. He also served as Faculty Advisor and Chief Editor for the graduate student journal, Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of the Americas.

Hernández-Durán’s primary area of specialization is late colonial visual culture in New Spain with secondary specializations in Museum Studies, Aztec Art, and African Art. His publications on 18th century painting and 19th century museum practice have appeared in such journals and anthologies as Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide: Visual Cultures of the Nineteenth Century, Religion as Art, Woman and Art in Early Modern Latin America, and Hacia otra historia del arte en México. He has a forthcoming article in The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Studies titled “The Politics of Colonial Canon Formation in Nineteenth-Century Mexico” and two books on the historiography of colonial art: The Academy of San Carlos and Mexican Art History: Politics, History, and Art in Nineteenth-Century Mexico (Ashgate Press) and A Historiography of Colonial Art in Mexico, ca. 1855–1934 (University of New Mexico Press).
Dr. Kathryn J. McKnight
Associate Professor, Department of Spanish & Portuguese
Associate Director for Academic Programs, LAII
University of New Mexico

Dr. Kathryn J. McKnight earned a B.A. in Latin American Studies (1982) from Earlham College, and an M.A. (1987) and Ph.D. (1992) in Spanish from Stanford University. Since 2000 she has taught with the Department of Spanish & Portuguese at the University of New Mexico and since 2009 she has served as the Associate Director for Academic Programs with the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute. Her primary areas of teaching include colonial literatures and discourses, women writers of the early modern period, and Afro-Hispanic narratives and cultures of early modern Ibero America.

McKnight's research focuses on the voices of those who speak from the margins of colonial Spanish American society, particularly considering how individuals and groups contest their portrayals by those in power. She has written on testimonies by people of African descent in New Spain and Cartagena de Indias, with articles appearing in the Colonial Latin American Review, Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History, Colonial Latin American Historical Review, and Revista de Estudios Hispánicos. In 2009 McKnight published the anthology Afro-Latino Voices: Documentary Narratives from the Early Modern Iberian World, 1550-1812 (Hacket, 2009), co-edited with historian Leo Garafolo. McKnight is the recipient of the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize for an outstanding book published in English in the field of Latin American and Spanish literatures and cultures (1998) for her book, The Mystic of Tunja, the Writings of Madre Castillo, 1671-1742 (University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).
Dr. Mariselle Meléndez
Associate Professor, Department of Spanish, Italian, & Portuguese
Associate Head and Interim Director, Graduate Studies
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dr. Mariselle Meléndez earned a B.A in Hispanic Studies (1986) from the Universidad de Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, and an M.A. in Spanish (1987) and Ph.D. in Spanish American Literature (1993) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Meléndez currently serves as Associate Head and Interim Director of Graduate Studies and Associate Professor for the Colonial Spanish American Literatures and Cultures Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is also affiliated with the university’s Latina/Latino Studies Program. Her courses address colonial Spanish America with a focus on racial formation, historiography, literariness, and visual expressions.

Meléndez’s areas of specialization include colonial Spanish American literatures and cultures, with special emphasis paid to the eighteenth century, as well as gender, race, and cultural studies. Colonial and postcolonial theory, as well as visual studies and nineteenth-century female essayists, also comprise her research. Meléndez has published several books in recent years, most recently authoring *Deviant and Useful Citizens: The Cultural Production of the Female Body in Eighteenth-Century Peru* (Forthcoming, Vanderbilt University Press) and co-editing *Mapping Colonial Spanish America: Places and Commonplaces of Identity, Culture and Experience* (Bucknell University Press, 2002). In addition to these texts, Meléndez has also written over thirty journal articles and book chapters. She is currently at work on two book-length manuscripts, *Patriotic Enlightenments: Local Epistemologies and Transnational Exchanges in Eighteenth-century Spanish American Newspapers* and *The Cultural Geography of Spanish American Ports in the Age of Enlightenment*. She is the recipient of a medal and certification of recognition as “Joven destacada de Puerto Rico” (Outstanding Young Puerto Rican) from the Comisión Ejecutiva Puertorriqueña de la Juventud and UNESCO (2001).
Dr. Anna Nogar
Assistant Professor, Department of Spanish & Portuguese
University of New Mexico

Dr. Anna Nogar received a B.A. in Biochemistry and Spanish (2000) from the University of New Mexico, and an M.A. in Hispanic Literature (2004) and Ph.D. in Hispanic Literature and Mexican American Studies (2008) from the University of Texas at Austin. Nogar has taught in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese at the University of New Mexico since 2008, where she is also affiliated with the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute. Her courses have addressed Chicano and New Mexico literature as well as contemporary Mexican American culture.

Nogar’s research examines the evolution of a subversive transatlantic miracle narrative from the 17th to the 21st century using a Mexican-American cultural studies approach. More broadly, she has examined Mexican American cultural studies and literature, colonial Latin American literature, and transatlantic studies, with particular emphasis placed upon the sociopolitical function of bicultural texts and the recasting of the colonial in the present day. She has written articles in journals such as Trans-Revue de littérature générale et comparée as well as authored various encyclopedia entries and book chapters.
Dr. Eleuterio Santiago-Díaz  
Associate Professor, Department of Spanish & Portuguese  
University of New Mexico

Dr. Eleuterio Santiago-Díaz earned a B.A. in Anthropology and Geography (1980) from the University of Puerto Rico, an M.A. in Spanish and Portuguese (1990) from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a Ph.D. in Hispanic Studies (2003) from Brown University. Since 1998 Santiago-Díaz has taught with the Department of Spanish & Portuguese at the University of New Mexico, offering courses which address modern Spanish-American poetry and Afro-Caribbean literature, social change, and vanguard literary movements in Latin America. He is affiliated with the UNM Latin American & Iberian Institute.

Santiago-Díaz specializes in Latin American literature with an emphasis on the Hispanic Caribbean and Afro-Hispanic literature and culture. His research and teaching interests include critical theory on race, writing and modernity, Puerto Rican literature, Latin American poetry from Modernismo to the present, and U.S. Latino Caribbean literature. Santiago-Díaz is the author of *Escritura afropuer-torriqueña y modernidad* (Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana/University of Pittsburgh, 2007). As part of this book, he examines critical moments in the reflection of Puerto Rican intellectuals on the subjects of race, nation and modernity, and develops a theory of the ellipsis as a tactical figure for the understanding of Afro-Puerto Rican and Afro-Hispanic writing. His journal articles have focused on Puerto Rican and Latin American writers in the U.S. to examine the discourses through which they negotiate conflicting racial and national paradigms across cultural borders.
Dr. Lorelle Semley
Assistant Professor, Department of History
College of the Holy Cross

Dr. Lorelle Semley earned a B.S. in French (1991) from Georgetown University, an M.A. in African Studies (1995) from Yale University, and an M.A. (1996) and Ph.D. (2002) in History from Northwestern University. After teaching at Wesleyan University for several years, Semley will be joining the History Department at the College of the Holy Cross. As a historian of Africa, Semley teaches over 4,000 years of African history from ancient Egypt to contemporary events. By necessity, her courses are interdisciplinary, incorporating archaeology, anthropology, literature, film, and even YouTube videos. Her own research on modern West Africa, French imperialism, gender, and the Atlantic world also draws upon diverse source materials, far-flung archives, and multiple theoretical frameworks.

Dr. Renée Soulodre-La France
Associate Professor, Department of History
King’s University College at the University of Western Ontario

Dr. Renée Soulodre-La France completed her undergraduate degree and M.A. at the University of Alberta and her Ph.D. at the University of California, San Diego. Soulodre-La France currently teaches colonial and modern Latin American history at the King’s University College at the University of Western Ontario. Her courses include a senior seminar on 20th century revolutions and violence in Latin America as well as several courses that focus on colonial society, slavery in Africa and Latin America, religion and popular culture in Latin America. She is also an Affiliate Scholar with the Harriet Tubman Research Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples at York University, Toronto, as well as a member of the Hispanic Baroque Research Group.

Soulodre-La France’s research interests include the history of Nueva Granada. Her first book Región e imperio. El Tolima Grande y las Reformas Borbónicas en el siglo XVIII was published by the ICANH in Bogotá in 2004. Her more recent work focuses upon the social and cultural history of the enslaved in Latin America and the inter-racial relationships that developed within the colonial world when Indigenous, African and European populations were brought together. In 2004 she co-edited the book Africa and the Americas: Interconnections During the Slave Trade (Africa World Press) alongside José C. Curto. In 2008 she co-edited with José Ramón Jouve Martin a special number of the Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispanicos: La Constitución del Barroco: Problemas y Acercamientos. Within the Hispanic Baroque group, Soulodre-La France is developing a study on cofradías in Nuevo Granada, examining them as transnational corporate institutions through which cultural and religious identities were shaped in the 17th and 18th centuries. This study focuses upon the brotherhoods created by Africans and their descendents and considers the intriguing transection of ethnicity and cultural diversity and the creation and re-creation of cultural practices.
Dr. Ben Vinson III
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Dr. Ben Vinson, III earned an A.B. in History and Classical Studies (1992) from Dartmouth College, and an M.A., M.Phil, and Ph.D. (1998) in Latin American History from Columbia University. Vinson currently serves as Director of the Center for African Studies as well as the Vice Dean for Centers and Interdepartmental Programs at Johns Hopkins University. Vinson teaches courses which encompass themes related to the Latin American colonial experience, family social history, the African Diaspora, and race-relations in Latin America.

Vinson is a Latin American historian with a particular interest in race relations, especially the experience of the African Diaspora. His research focuses on colonial Mexico and is balanced by a broader range of interests that include the 19th and 20th century. His interests also include transnational networks, particularly the experiences between African-Americans and Latinos (as well as Afro-Latinos). He has written a number of articles and books on these themes, including Bearing Arms for his Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico (Stanford, 2001), Flight: The Story of Virgil Richardson, A Tuskegee Airman in Mexico (Palgrave, 2004), and Afirnemexico (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004). Vinson has forthcoming work appearing on the experiences of Afro-Mexicans in North Carolina, as well as a current book-length project involving an assessment of the Mexican colonial caste system – particularly the experiences of what he calls the ‘forgotten casts’ – lobos, moriscos, coyotes, and chinos. He is a recipient of a Mellon Grant for the Diaspora Pathways Archival Access Project (2007-2010), a National Humanities Center Fellowship (2005-2006), and a Rockefeller Grant for the Study of Diasporic Racisms (2004).
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