

28th Annual Conference on the Americas

An Inter-disciplinary and Inter-cultural Conference

University of Georgia, Health Science Campus, Athens, GA
105 Spear Rd, Athens, GA 30606

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Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute (LACSI)

Friday & Saturday

February 21 & 22

2025



Latin American and
Caribbean Studies Institute
Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
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28th Annual Conference on the Americas

DAY 1

Friday, February 21, 2025

1:00 – 2:30 pm (ET)

Session 1A

Room: 202

Arts, Language and Literature I

Miradas al cine documental boliviano del siglo XXI

Dr. Jaime Salinas, University of North Georgia

A Temporary Loss of Image: Mel Casas and the 1975 Whitney Biennial

Dr. Ana Pozzi Harris, University of North Georgia

In 1975, San Antonio-based Chicano artist Mel Casas (1929-2014) created six large paintings satirizing the prominent American art movements of the time—Pop art, Conceptualism, and Abstract art—and taking aim at figures like Roy Lichtenstein and Marcel Duchamp. These six works marked a shift from his earlier Chicano themes, suggesting a response to his experience with the 1975 Whitney Biennial of American Art. This renowned New York biennial was once said to take the "temperature and trends of current U.S. painting." Casas's *Anatomy of a White Dog*, a 1974 acrylic on canvas, was included in the 1975 Whitney. This painting depicts a giant femur surrounded by three snarling hounds with bared teeth and drooling tongues. It was later interpreted as a commentary on police violence against Black Civil Rights protesters in 1960s Alabama. The work was featured in a historic New York Times review that criticized the Whitney's decision to include artists who had neither shown work in New York nor held solo exhibitions there. Through historical catalogs, reviews, and archival sources, my analysis considers how, even as a participant in a prestigious national exhibition, an out-of-town minority artist like Casas faced exclusion in the New York art scene. I interpret Casas's six paintings from 1975, which parodied established American art styles, as an expression of his frustration with this environment.

Redefining Colombian Fashion: Johanna Ortiz's Fusion of Tradition, Elegance, and Global Influence

Ms. Cassandra Hunt, Clemson University

This study analyzes how Colombian designer Johanna Ortiz redefines Colombian fashion by blending traditional elements with global influences. I argue that through her collections, Ortiz deconstructs hypersexualized stereotypes tied to Colombian "narco-aesthetics" by presenting an elegant, understated femininity. Ortiz uses luxury materials to tailor her designs to a global elite audience. At the same time, she employs traditional Colombian symbols (poppy, orchid), designs (pollera,) and materials (indigenous fabrics such as manta guijara) with the goal of showcasing the richness of Colombian culture while challenging prevailing stereotypes.

It is not uncommon for designers, in their quest for commercial success, to globalize local garments without considering the traditions and communities that produce and wear these items. This phenomenon, known as "deterritorialization," occurs when traditional garments are adapted for luxury fashion, raising debates about cultural appreciation versus appropriation. A notable example of this is Dior's 2005 collection by John Galliano, which faced controversy for its perceived superficiality in Andean-inspired designs, highlighting the complexities of representing cultural heritage in international fashion. However, I argue that this is not the case of Ortiz's work. Through her focus on sustainable practices and dedication to empowering the Colombian artisan community, Ortiz exemplifies a socially responsible approach to luxury. This paper aims to contribute to the understanding of how Latin American fashion designers can authentically elevate cultural identity on the global stage.

Literacies in displacement in Rubens Figueiredo's *Passageiro no fim do dia*

Mr. Michel Soares do Carmo, University of Georgia

This paper analyzes the complex relationships between literacy, urban displacement, and social inequality in Figueiredo's *Passageiro no fim do dia* (Passenger at the End of the Day). The novel, published in 2010, offers a critical view of contemporary Brazilian society through the experiences of its main characters: Pedro, Julio, and Rosane. The fragmented narrative mirrors the urban disorder and fractured identities of contemporary subjects, exploring themes such as violence, urban chaos, and labor exploitation. Here I examine how the characters' different levels of literacy influence their perceptions and interactions with the urban space. Pedro, the protagonist, symbolizes a tense relationship with formal knowledge, reflecting an educational system that fails to engage him. Julio represents mastery of this system, using it to maintain his status quo. Rosane, in turn, struggles against socioeconomic barriers in pursuit of education and social mobility. In the novel, books emerge as a symbolic object, representing access to knowledge and the possibilities of social and intellectual mobility. Through a decolonial perspective, this paper criticizes exclusionary paradigms of Brazilian society, exploring how literacies intertwine with narratives of displacement and social exclusion. *Passageiro no fim do dia* in that frame reveals itself as an important field of investigation for understanding the nuances of urban displacement through its relationship to (formal) literacies and its sociocultural implications in contemporary Brazil.

Epistemological Marronage and Caribbean Borderland Tensions in Elizabeth Acevedo's *Clap When You Land*

Elisa Braga, University of Georgia

The experience of black women in Latin America and the Caribbean is one that has long been silenced and erased from history. Casamayor-Cisneros (2022) characterizes the production of knowledge by Afro-Caribbean women as an epistemological marronage, since they create counter hegemonic epistemologies that go directly against the mainstream discourse, giving voice to a silenced part of the population that can finally take agency over narratives about themselves. *Clap When You Land* (2020), by Afro-Dominican author Elizabeth Acevedo, incorporates this epistemological marronage in multiple ways, which I will analyze in this paper. I will also explore how the intersections of identity create different tensions of power between the women in the narrative, specifically touching on the topics of geography, wealth and education between the sisters Yahaira and Camino. Expanding on the topic of geography, I will discuss the part of the ocean in the novel as a metaphorical border between the island and the mainland, which is a key factor in the shaping of the identity of Caribbean women.

History, Ethnographic and Archeological Science**Puerto Ricans' Resistance to American Imperialism from the Americans' Perspective**

Dr. Ligia Domenech, Columbus State University

In 1898 the United States acquired Puerto Rico as a colony. This prompted the interest of a variety of Americans (military personnel, news correspondents, wealthy investors, missionaries, politicians, scientists, potential tourists) who wanted to know more about their colony, and about its potential usefulness for them. Some visited the Island and then wrote about their experiences and their books were never intended to be read by Puerto Ricans: they were in English and mostly published in the United States. Inadvertently, they portrayed the resistance of Puerto Ricans to obey the dictates of the U.S. empire.

Colonialism is designed to take away from the colonized their culture and identity, their confidence, their voice, their power. Through systematic humiliation and devaluation of the colonized people and their culture, the empire extinguishes their hope and energy. When Puerto Ricans realized that they were not being liberated from colonialism, and that they were only trading empires, they were not as submissive as before. But, as Puerto Ricans who openly and violently confronted the empire paid dearly for their "transgression", a direct confrontation was avoided by the majority.

Other forms of resistance were used. The colonizers' books reveal the many ways in which Puerto Ricans expressed their contempt and repudiation for their colonial situation: by working as little as necessary for the American companies that exploited them; expressing their contained violence towards fellow Puerto Ricans; engaging in socially sanctioned "crimes" such as bootlegging and "la bolita"; resisting the Americanization campaign that taught Puerto Rican children to love and support the empire; developing a fatalistic view of life sprinkled with a lot of humor; and proudly retaining their language and culture. For Puerto Ricans, life has been a one-day-at-a-time event of collective survival and defiance of the American empire.

"¡Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh, Lucharemos Hasta el Fin!": Revolutionary Chilean Solidarity with the People of Vietnam

Dr. Juan-Pablo Valenzuela, Georgia State University Perimeter College

This paper looks at two popular Chilean demonstrations against U.S. intervention in the Vietnam War: the student- and worker-led "March for Life" in 1967 and the youth-led "First Latino-North American Encounter in Solidarity with Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia" in 1971, both professing solidarity with the people of Southeast Asia. To be clear, these two developments were not the only South-South cases of solidarity with the people of Vietnam coming out of Revolutionary Chile. As I explore elsewhere, between 1964 and 1973, Chileans protested U.S. imperialism in Southeast Asia through public demonstrations, summits and encounters, and cultural productions. Looking at the transformation of Chilean solidarity with the people of Vietnam provides new insight into the change through time between Chilean administrations, reflecting a growing sense of imperialist antagonism to the Chilean revolutionary experiment in 1967 and the translation of the will of the people into government policy after 1970. In other words, U.S. interventionist aspirations in Chile became increasingly more imminent and palpable by 1967, culminating in a full commitment to curtail the equally imminent political triumph of socialist Salvador Allende in subsequent years. As a result, the everyday forms of bottom-up activities of the Chilean socialist experience seamlessly intensified into the official policies of Allende's Popular Unity government (UP), and demonstrative solidarity with the people of Vietnam reflects this change. Revolutionary Chilean solidarity with the people of Vietnam became more official after 1970, reflecting concerns of self-preservation and internationalist solidarity, justified by the fact that by this time, the U.S. government compensated its impending military defeat in Vietnam by taking a more possessive stance toward Latin America, and therefore democratic Chilean socialism.

The Religious Factor and Life Satisfaction in Guyana

Prof. Leon Wilson, Morgan State University and Brenda I. Gill, Alabama State University

“Quality of Life” (QOL) has been variously studied and thus subjected to definitions ranging from environmental quality to subjective perceptions of personal well-being. Sometimes, the concept is used interchangeably with “life satisfaction,” though empirical differences exist. In this paper, we present data using a well-validated index of life satisfaction scale to assess respondents' evaluation of personal life quality in Guyana. Using data from the Guyana Water Incorporated Nationwide Health and Customer Satisfaction Survey, we assess the religious contexts of life quality in Guyana. The representative sample of three thousand seven hundred and eight three (N=3783) adult participants from seven regions of the country responded to various questions, allowing for a wide range of variables that are known correlates of cognitive evaluations of life quality. In this paper, we target “life satisfaction” as the pivotal concept because of its centrality to the quality of one's life, the absence of which is associated with several deleterious outcomes. We provide empirical data about its distribution in the Guyanese population based on the five individual items measuring life satisfaction and then as an aggregated construct. We then assess the religious factor because of the salience of religiosity in the country. We posit that religious affiliation, religious practices, and intrinsic religious values would positively impact perceptions of life satisfaction even after controlling for known demographic influences. Preliminary analyses indicate that religious affiliation and practices matter less than reported intrinsic spiritual values. One important value of this work is that it provides baseline data that allow for future assessments of any temporal shifts in the perceptions of life satisfaction in Guyana.

Languages, cultures and identities: Study abroad HBCU student experiences

Dr. Irina Tedrick, University of South Carolina, Sumter

Social learning theory, as proposed by Bandura and Vygotsky, emphasizes the role of teachers as cognitive mentors who guide students as they engage in social interactions. I aim to leverage this concept by fostering two-way interactions that enhance students' focus, build trust, and explore new cultural and linguistic opportunities in Costa Rica. This environment encourages students to express themselves freely, away from the constraints of a predominantly ideologically controlled setting. During my 20 years in Georgia's educational system, I have observed numerous discrepancies and inequalities within the Southern educational landscape. Historically, Black students were excluded from the mainstream educational narrative until the 1970s (Siddle-Walker, 1996), and the consequences of this systematic exclusion continue to affect participation in study abroad programs today. In a society where “the poverty of an increasingly large segment of the most economically advanced societies, the extraordinary growth in income differences, and the progressive disappearance of autonomous cultural production—such as film and publishing—are prevalent, it is challenging to motivate students to study foreign languages and cultures, as well as to believe in the concept of global citizenship” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 37). How can I spark interest in a Black student from a rural or traditionally segregated Southern community, who has limited financial means, to join the program? Many universities across the country aim to “create global citizens” within the broader academic context. This term, “global citizens,” warrants a definition, particularly in terms of overarching multiculturalism and diversity, which are both imminent and necessary in our time.

I can contribute to this discussion by emphasizing the role that intercultural exchange plays in shaping “global citizens,” drawing from both my students' experiences and my own in regular classrooms and during travels. The contributions of study abroad to understanding and developing racial and cultural sensitivity, as well as fostering diversity, are evident. Furthermore, according to Brux and Fry (2010), it is crucial for undergraduate students to engage in international experiences. Through these experiences, students can attain “cultural competence,” which translates into competitive work-related skills. Cultural competence, as defined by NAFSA (2015), is characterized as the ability to understand different cultural norms.

Socioeconomic Challenges facing by Afrocolombian women

Mrs. Ana Maria Ramirez-Gomez, University of Florida

This study seeks to examine the impact of Afro-Colombian women's entrepreneurship in Cali, Colombia, on their households' economy and their families' quality of life. We conducted interviews and surveys at business events and workplaces to understand this impact. The data collected during three months of fieldwork in Colombia has been analyzed using statistical programs. The results and research process will be presented in an academic thesis and shared with the participating Afro-Colombian women. This will benefit the community by providing valuable information and can be used by local authorities for their policy programs.

Investigating the Value of Shadowing Healthcare Professionals in Belize

Professor Amy Medlock, University of Georgia

Shadowing healthcare professionals allows students to observe practitioners as role models before committing to further studies in a specific field. This experience provides insight into the daily tasks of healthcare providers and the roles of individuals and teams within healthcare settings. Shadowing is encouraged or required for further training as a healthcare professional. However, undergraduates often face challenges in securing shadowing opportunities due to limited availability and lack of direct connections with healthcare providers, creating inequities. Shadowing internationally within study abroad programs is one way to address such inequities as shadowing is determined by the program directors and not dependent on student connections. This raises the question of the value of international shadowing. To address this question, we surveyed students who participated in the Health in Belize in 2024. We collected pre- and post-surveys to determine program expectations, strengths, weaknesses, and overall impact. Data were analyzed and coded by three independent researchers who met and refined the code for final data analysis. Results showed that students came in with either very little shadowing or a significant amount in multiple medical specialties, mainly primary care and cardiology. Student expectations with respect to the program were learning about tropical diseases, healthcare in Belize, and roles of different healthcare professionals. The most impactful shadowing experience reported by students was surgery, while the least impactful was pharmacy. The themes reported by students were predominately extrospective and included cultural sensitivity in healthcare and teamwork of healthcare professionals. Overall, shadowing in Belize provided a valuable experience that broadened students' perspectives. To validate these results and determine if similar themes apply in different countries, we plan to collect data for the Health in South Africa in 2024 and Health in Belize program in 2025.

Consequences of unrepaired clinically diagnosed craniosynostosis in an individual with craniofrontonasal syndrome caused by an EFNB1 variant

Ms. Danielle Jolly, AU/UGA Medical Partnership of the Medical College of Georgia, Dominique Assing, St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada, Dong Li, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Beverly Nelson, Pediatrician Private Practice, Elizabeth J. Bhoj, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and Andrew K. Sobering, AU/UGA Medical Partnership of the Medical College of Georgia

Craniofrontonasal syndrome is a frontonasal dysplasia that displays an unusual X-linked dominant inheritance pattern due to pathogenic variants in EFNB1 that encodes a membrane bound ligand for the ephrin receptor. Females exhibit a more severe phenotype than males and may manifest with craniosynostosis, hypertelorism, craniofacial asymmetry, thoracic skeleton abnormalities and other features. Males typically only develop a milder hypertelorism or they have no discernable features at all. We describe a 14-year-old female from a resource-limited Caribbean community who has facial dysmorphology and microcephaly due to an apparently uncorrected (clinically diagnosed) craniosynostosis. Exome sequencing revealed a novel pathogenic EFNB1 c.129-2A>G splice site variant that explains her physical features. She has mild intellectual disability which likely resulted from the lack of surgical correction of her craniosynostosis. Exploring her case highlights the importance of accessibility to healthcare within these communities. The importance of recognizing craniosynostosis and its indications for surgical repair is illustrated.

Increasing Healthcare Accessibility through Partnership in the Caribbean

Ms. Tajah Damm, AU/UGA Medical Partnership of the Medical College of Georgia

Healthcare accessibility in the Caribbean has challenges due to limited resources, socioeconomic barriers, and geographic isolation, which delays timely access to some medical services. We are three medical students (2 based in the US, and 1 based in Grenada) engaged with healthcare initiatives in Grenada, primarily dedicated to sickle cell care, pediatric outreach, and post-natural disaster psychosocial first-aid.

We have collaborated with various Grenada-based organizations, including the Sickle Cell Association of Grenada, which aims to raise awareness, increase access to screenings, and improve care for patients with this condition. Their work is crucial for individuals affected by this chronic condition, which is prevalent in the Caribbean region.

In pediatric outreach, we have been fortunate to volunteer through CHORES Support Group Grenada, which focuses on providing specialized support for children with congenital conditions, including cardiac defects, metabolic disorders, and craniofacial conditions. This initiative has been crucial in meeting the needs of members of underserved communities with such conditions.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, we participated in the 'Return to Happiness' program established by Reach Within and the Windward Islands Research and Education Foundation (WINDREF), in which psychological first-aid was provided to the residents of Grenada's sister isle, Petite Martinique. This partnership provided coping workshops, art sessions, and other forms of psychological support to individuals of all ages.

Through engaging in these initiatives, we seek to learn from these unique perspectives, facilitate cross-border collaboration in healthcare, and promote global physical and mental health efforts in Grenada and the wider Caribbean. Our poster will discuss the challenges and lessons learned through these experiences and emphasize the importance of international medical partnerships.

Beyond Childcare: Intersectionality of Gender, Race, and Class in the Lives of Brazilian Au Pair Caregivers in the United States

Ms. Jorgelina Benitez, University of Florida, Dominique Assing, School of Medicine, St. George's University, Grenada, Megha Sequiras, AU/UGA Medical Partnership, and Andrew Sobering, AU/UGA Medical Partnership

For over 30 years, the US Au Pair program has temporarily allowed young people from abroad to migrate and experience American culture. The Au Pair Program, a cultural exchange program, involves an upper-middle-class family hosting a young foreign woman for one or two years. During this time, au pairs improve their English skills, learn about typical American family dynamics, gain career and life skills, and experience daily life in the United States. In exchange, the au pair provides childcare services. This study examines the experiences of Brazilian au pairs in the United States, focusing on how intersecting identities of gender, race, and class shape their caregiving roles and migration pathways. Grounded in intersectionality theory and the global care framework, this research contextualizes the US Au Pair program within broader racialized and gendered labor migration patterns. Brazilian au pairs, positioned as cultural exchange participants, navigate unique challenges within a system that undervalues care work while exploiting their gendered and racialized labor. The study draws on interviews and critical analysis to explore how Brazilian au pairs differ from other migrant caregivers, particularly in their dual roles as temporary laborers and cultural ambassadors. It highlights the structural inequalities reinforced by the program's framing of caregiving as "natural" female work, alongside systemic racial biases that affect their experiences. This research also addresses the historical legacy of domestic labor in Brazil, linking colonial practices to contemporary dynamics in care work. This study contributes to broader discussions on migration, labor, and social justice in the Americas by focusing on the lived experiences of Brazilian au pairs. It offers insights into how cultural exchange programs perpetuate global inequalities while presenting opportunities for transnational mobility. This work aims to inform policy recommendations to improve labor protections and recognition for au pairs within the global care economy.

**Viewing perspectives and narrations from the Meseta P'urepécha on culture and traditions post-NAFTA.
(Experimental Oral History Project)**

Ms. Maria Monsserat De La Cruz Mora, University of Florida

In Mexico avocado production takes place mainly within the Avocado Belt in Michoacan, a volcanic region situated within the Meseta P'urepécha, home to the dominant ethnolinguistic¹ community known as the P'urepécha who have a diverse and long-standing traditions and customs. The western academic literature largely makes mention of the negative aspects of violence and environmental impacts surrounding the production of avocados and its impact on local cultures. This project will explore other perspectives by analyzing how this monoculture market impacts customs and traditions in the Meseta P'urepécha, from individuals who are inhabitants and workers of this community and work in relation to the Avocado production. I used qualitative research methods, both semi-structured interviews and participant observation, to create a documentary to contribute to current scholarship and gain deeper insight into lived experiences and oral histories by intensive agriculture laborers, who work specifically with Hass Avocado. My focus will be on laborers dedicated to the Avocado production who reside in the Meseta P'urepécha Michoacan. I will use my data to discuss another perspective held by communities in the Meseta P'urepécha a parallel to the Avocado belt production to discuss changes in their traditions and customs as a result of the trade policies post-NAFTA. This project will contribute to the current literature on the effects of the over-production of Avocados in this region as a result of post-NAFTA policy in Michoacan. It will explain what happened to the communities and their traditions and customs as a result of these policies.

Arts, Language and Literature II**Entomological Collectivities: Insects, biopolitics, and the representation of “monstrous populations” in Latin America**

Dr. Santiago Quintero, Furman University

Insect metaphors, particularly those involving ants, have played a pivotal role in Latin American cultural history, often serving as tools for dehumanization and the erosion of subjectivity within the framework of the monstrous. These metaphors encapsulate what Christopher Hollinsworth describes as the "poetics of the Hive," (2016) enabling the exploration of identity through the lens of collectivity. Swarms, invasions, and pests evoke critical discussions surrounding difference, governance, and biopolitics, from the colonial administration of Indigenous populations to the regulation of mestizo labor under modern capitalism and the policing of Latinx immigrants in the U.S. Such representations reflect broader anxieties about managing marginalized groups, encoding fears of birth rates, labor strikes, and urban unrest.

Following texts that range from *Historia de Indias* (XVI c.) by Las Casas, *The empire of the Ants* (1905) by Wells, *Them!* (1952), *Cien años de soledad* (1967) by García Márquez, and *Quarta feria de Cinzas/ Epilogue* (2006), among other written and video texts, this presentation examines the specific "scopic regimes" tied to these metaphors, highlighting practices of surveillance and control, including aerial views, close-ups, and CCTV imagery. As I show, these visual technologies synthesize the scientific detachment of the observer and the paranoid gaze of colonial power, framing marginalized populations as "swarming monsters." This study explores, thus, how ant metaphors have historically rendered visible biopolitical concerns tied to modernity's project in Latin America. Finally, my presentation analyzes how recent artistic works challenge these entrenched visual logics, subverting the ant trope to imagine new, emancipatory biopolitical relations. These works suggest alternative ways of seeing and engaging with marginalized populations, fostering collective resistance and new forms of social solidarity or, what I call "entomological collectivities."

A Theatrical Life in Matías Piñeiros' Film Series *Las Shakespearíadas*

Dr. Derek Beaudry, University of North Georgia

There is a paradox that some critics have discussed in which the medium of theater seems to be on the wane and yet continues to be important, subtending, beyond the realm of theater, experience in modern life. The contemporary Argentine film director Matías Piñeiro stages the significance of the theatrical in a series of six films he has called "*Las Shakespearíadas*" (*The Shakespeare Reads*) that inventively draw on the comedies of William Shakespeare in ways that make it difficult to call them adaptations, or even loosely based on the Bard's work. If in film history there has been a current of thought that has tried to distance film from theater, arguing that film's capacity for verisimilitude is superior to that of theater, in this presentation I show how Piñeiro's films foreground the film medium's constitutive relation to a modern theater that arose in 16th and 17th century Europe. Additionally, I argue that Piñeiro's films explore how the conventions of this modern theater have informed our sense of spatiality, that is, how we experience space and our relations in space, not only in film but also in everyday life. His films demonstrate this in their amplification of the comedy's tortuous displacements of time and space, the confusion between characters and actors, as well Piñeiros' unconventional approach to translation of the plays. In all, the films evoke a sense of spatiality in which the mimetic categories of reality and appearance are not so much blurred or erased but shown to be mutually informing each other, where, as a result, spatial relations are not predetermined but made up of complex, singular assemblages. For all their embrace of the theatrical - or, precisely because of it - Piñeiro's films are interested in film realism, in continuing to explore film's mimetic capabilities.

Traditional masculinity as a spectacle within the United States due to a neo-baroque identity crisis in the 21st century

Ms. Daniela Hernández, University of Georgia

By linearly analyzing architecture, paintings and documents of the Spanish Baroque period such as Luis Tristán's Holy Family (1613) painting, Guamán Poma's "El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno", and aspects of key Baroque buildings such as El Escorial, two main ideological frameworks are established: religious narratives and a fetishization of power. I propose that these two main processes find continuity in the contemporary dynamics of the United States through the current masculine religious revival and political parade. This revival is evident in the current trend of young men being more prone to religious affiliation than women (Graham, "With Gen Z, Men Are Now More Religious Than Women") and, conversely, women leaving organized religion in droves (Cox and Hammond "Young Women Are Leaving Church in Unprecedented Numbers"). These ideological frameworks compensate for the erosion of men's traditional roles, particularly in contexts of economic instability. In my view, traditional masculinity in both contexts functions as a spectacle where a carefully constructed performance of strength, dominance, and assertiveness mask the underlying fragility of male identity in turbulent times. Thus, it can be established that these ideological frameworks that flourished in the Spanish Baroque period continue in contemporary society in the United States to create the facade of masculine dominance via their characteristic mirage aestheticism of the Baroque period and heightened religious fervor.

También la lluvia: El impacto duradero de la explotación colonial

Hayden Roof, Clemson University

La llegada de los españoles al continente americano estableció un precedente de explotación que sigue desapoderando a las comunidades indígenas a pesar de los innumerables esfuerzos de la resistencia civil para cambiarlo. La crítica de esta realidad y su impacto en las comunidades indígenas del presente es el tema principal de la película española También la lluvia (Bollaín, 2008). Es un filme dentro del otro, ya que narra la historia de un equipo de filmación español-boliviano filmando en la región de Cochabamba, Bolivia, sobre la incursión de Cristóbal Colón en el Caribe. Así establece dos tramas y dos narraciones que en un momento determinado convergen cuando se desarrolla una protesta civil real contra los efectos dañinos de la privatización del agua en la región. En este ensayo me enfocaré en cómo el personaje de Daniel, que representa al líder indígena Hatuey en la producción, y el líder de su comunidad indígena en Cochabamba demuestra el efecto duradero del colonialismo en el siglo XVI detrás de las semejanzas de su persecución por la clase o raza dominante en los dos papeles.

Cuba and Soviet Internationalism: Blazing Island (Roman Karmen, 1961) and I am Cuba (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964)

Prof. Magdalena Matuskova, Clemson University

This essay compares two Soviet films about Cuba, Roman Karmen's Blazing Island and Mikhail Kalatozov's I am Cuba. I examine how the two filmmakers integrated Cuba to the discourse of Soviet internationalism and how Cubans reacted to such representation. Blazing Island is a documentary film, narrating the most important events of the resistance against dictator Batista, and the first years of the new regime in Cuba after 1959. Karmen's film received many accolades from Cuban critics and became notorious abroad for its fierce support for the Cuban Revolution. I am Cuba is a Cuban-Soviet co-production. It was a solidarity project aimed to provide training to Cuban cinema personnel, but it was also meant to show the superiority of the USSR during the era of the so-called Khrushchevian optimism when the prospects of bringing Third World countries under the Soviet sphere of influence seemed achievable. The great symbolic value of the film determined the Soviet resources invested but also its reception in Cuba. I argue that Karmen and Kalatozov both negotiated between two competing narratives: narrative of solidarity (Soviet internationalism) and narrative of sovereignty (Cuban decolonialism). The reactions to both films in Cuba prove that the Soviet vision of Cuba and its revolution, grounded in Soviet internationalism and solidarity discourse, was only acceptable when it did not conflict with the image Cuban leadership wanted to convey of Cuba and its revolution. Karmen was able to reconcile the Soviet and Cuban visions of Cuba, but it appears that Kalatozov was not. As a result, Cuban cinema leadership and many viewers praised "the Cubanness" of Karmen's film, but they disliked and even resented I am Cuba's take on Cuba, its people and recent Cuban history.

Regional Geographical and Climate Issues I**Adapting to Climate Change through Interdisciplinary Solutions**

Dr. Felix Santiago-Collazo, University of Georgia, Rodolfo Scarati, University of São Paulo, Cristiano Cardoso, Brazil's National Service of Industrial Training, Donald Nelson, University of Georgia, and In Kee Kim, University of Georgia

Hurricanes cause major economic and human losses, primarily due to flooding. Increasing hurricane intensity and slower movement after landfall lead to prolonged rainfall and more flooding. This underscores the need for better flood forecasting using advanced modeling techniques to support risk mitigation. Island-scale flood modeling can improve forecasts in areas prone to extreme events. The Caribbean Islands, a key hurricane path in the Atlantic, lack sufficient flood modeling, affecting local hazard predictions. Current models require extensive data and computational resources, limiting their effectiveness.

This study introduces a new rainfall flood modeling framework to be tested in about 69% of Puerto Rico's coastal watersheds. The framework will (a) estimate rainfall from synthetic hurricanes, (b) identify affected watersheds, and (c) develop relationships between river geometry and watershed characteristics to address data gaps. It will use physics-based models like GSSHA and SWMM, executed automatically for each storm and basin using High-Performance Computing.

The goal is to create inundation maps for various hurricane categories and make them accessible via a web platform for community and government use. Future work will combine these maps with storm surge data to determine total water depth during combined events. This approach could be a vital planning tool for stakeholders in hurricane-prone insular areas, including the Caribbean.

Exploring the Dissemination of the Vetiver Grass System (VGS) to Address Environmental Issues, Generate Alternative Income Streams for Rural communities, and Secure a Local Low-Cost Solution to National Issues in Grenada, W.I.

Dr. Vanessa Slinger-Friedman, Kennesaw State University

This paper builds on the work of an UNDP GEF Small Grant Programme (SGP) funded project in 2020, in which a local Grenadian NGO, Eco Strategies Grenada Inc. (ESGI) reintroduced the use of vetiver grass as a readily available, green engineering tool to mitigate erosion, pollution, and land degradation, establish coastal and infrastructure protection and recharge the water-table. With the successful completion of the educational project to encourage use of the Vetiver System to mitigate erosion in Grenada, there has been greatly increased interest in and need for plant material by farmers who wish to protect their land and improve the soil and other stakeholders wishing to incorporate the Vetiver System in various environmental and economic projects throughout Grenada. In this presentation, the extent of expansion and dissemination of vetiver grass system in Grenada is explored along with an assessment of how the project is addressing environmental and sustainable issues, generating alternative income streams for rural communities, especially women, and securing a local solution to national issues.

Julius Popper: A Jewish Romanian Explorer in Tierra del Fuego

Dr. Georgeta Connor, Georgia Gwinnett College

Among Latin American nations, Argentina was the principal beneficiary of foreign entrepreneurial and colonizing activities, particularly in the late nineteenth century. Through widely settled by the British people, Southern Argentina has attracted a significant number of Balkan and Eastern European people. One of them was Julius Popper, a Romanian of Jewish ethnicity and Argentinian citizen, known as an Argentinian explorer, engineer, cartographer, and colonial entrepreneur, who briefly became a living legend in Tierra del Fuego (Fireland). The excited reaction in Buenos Aires about gold attracted not only adventurers from several parts of the world, but also businessmen and bankers of the capital. It was precisely at this time that Julius Popper came upon the scene as a modern “conquistador” of Tierra del Fuego, being both a controversial and influential figure. The image of Julius Popper as bringer of civilization to Tierra del Fuego stands uncontested, marred only by the accusation according to which he has directly or indirectly participated to the extermination of onas indigenous population. Employing qualitative research methods and personal study in Romania, this study investigates the presence of Julius Popper as a mining engineer and explorer in Tierra del Fuego, attempting to provide useful insights regarding his activities in the gold mining companies and the results of his expeditions in the extreme Austral part of Argentina.

Tracing Energy Transition: Global Trends and Regional Leadership

Dr. Camila Livio, University of Georgia, Zarina Jones, University of Georgia, Larissa Alvez Lozano, University of Georgia, and Lindsay Helen Rappe, University of Georgia

The United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP) is an annual meeting where members of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) coordinate activities related to climate change. One of the conference's primary goals is to assess previously implemented measures and provide new guidelines based on progress. Since its first session in Berlin in 1995, the conference has driven advancements in adopting non- and low-carbon energy sources and fostering international agreements, collectively referred to as the 'energy transition.'

Smil (2017) defined energy transition as the evolving composition and structure of primary energy supply. For example, the historical shift from traditional biomass fuels, such as wood and charcoal, to fossil fuels like coal and hydrocarbons represents one of the most significant and widespread transitions in history.

As discussions on climate change and energy transition intensify in the 21st century, identifying the fastest pathways to reduce carbon emissions has become critical. In this context, we propose a two-part analysis of energy transitions. First, we propose a computational approach to analyzing the concept of 'energy transition' over time, utilizing COP conference reports from 1995 to 2024. Building on this foundation, we then analyze the current energy infrastructure and policies of Brazil and Chile, highlighting their pivotal role in driving Latin America's energy transition (World Economic Forum, 2024). Specifically, we will address the following research questions: (1) How has the concept of 'energy transition' been translated into policy measures over time? and (2) What does the energy transition currently look like in Brazil and Chile, and what factors have enabled them to emerge as regional leaders?

Our approach is multidisciplinary, integrating perspectives from policy analysis, energy systems, and computational social science.

Immigration, Migration and Language**Critical Consciousness at the Margins: Im/migrant Children’s Co-Construction of Transborder Knowledges in Dual Language Bilingual Education Classrooms**

Dr. Mariana Lima Becker, University of Georgia

This presentation is based on a multi-year ethnographic study about how transborder children (ages 5-8) with ties to Brazil and the U.S. embody and develop critical consciousness in a K-5 (Portuguese/English) Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE) program in Massachusetts. Leveraging a decolonial transborder approach (Gallo, 2021; Gallo & Adams Corral, 2023) to foreground young children’s lived experiences and narratives related to critical consciousness formation, this presentation draws on field notes of classroom observations collected over three school calendar years (2028-2021) and interviews with DLBE teachers and students. Data analysis suggests that the im/migrant children leveraged spatio-temporal liminal zones of classroom life (or less supervised spaces/times during formal instruction) to draw on their varied experiences within and across national systems. In these liminal zones, the children embodied an in-betweenness of both countries, critiqued mononational expectations, and opened spaces for sense-making around issues of pressing relevance for their lives that remained invisible during instruction, such as documentation status and border crossing. Findings also indicate that DLBE teachers were aware of students’ transborder narratives, but consistently evaded opportunities to engage the children in conversations about immigration. The teachers expressed willingness to include a narrow range of “positive” or neutral images of immigration in their instruction, which further silenced pressing issues for students. This study bears implications for the education of im/migrant children in the U.S., stressing the need for pedagogies of border thinking (Cervantes-Soon & Carrillo, 2016), or teaching practices that are aimed at giving im/migrant students opportunities to recognize and cultivate their knowledges, critically examine their realities vis-à-vis power differences, and develop identities as agents of change. Additionally, this study also calls on education and im/migration scholars to attune to children’s knowledges, subjectivities, and actions on various scales as essential to understand and support their critical consciousness formation.

“There and back again”: reimagining Brazil through displacement and resistance in Por Cima do Mar, by Deborah Dornellas

Ms. Talita Nassur, University of Georgia, Romance Languages Department

Displacement narratives have been present throughout history for millennia, as seen in works such as *The Iliad* by Homer, *The Lusíadas* by Camões, and *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. In contemporary times, following tireless years of feminist and anti-racist movements, these narratives have taken on a new perspective: no longer from the point of view of the white male hero, but from that of women, especially Black and Indigenous women. Erased and/or nonexistent not only from heroic narratives—where they were absent as protagonists—but also from the official histories of Brazil, these stories are increasingly emerging in national discourse, reshaping the landscape of Brazilian literature. Through the lens of Brazilian Black feminism, decolonial feminism, and theories of displacement, this paper aims to analyze the book *Por Cima do Mar* by Deborah Dornellas, focusing on the protagonist Lígia Vitalina’s displacements throughout the novel. I argue that in many ways, the protagonist’s journey mirrors the process of Brazil’s formation, representing a metaphor for the construction of the nation, while simultaneously rewriting history and reintroducing crucial elements that were once erased. Additionally, I observe that the protagonist’s memoir writing and reflections not only help her process and overcome trauma but also serve as a means of resistance and protest against the various forms of oppression and discrimination she faces as a woman, Black, and from the periphery—both on a personal and national level. In doing so, Dornellas joins other Brazilian authors such as Conceição Evaristo and Ana Maria Resende in the process of reimagining the nation.

An Exploration of Venezuelan Migrant Workers' Experiences with Exploitation in Guyana's Labour Market

Ms. Kirly Bacchus, University of Guyana

Globally, migrant workers, particularly those in irregular situations, are vulnerable to being exploited in host countries. This research contributes to the literature by focusing on Venezuelan migrant workers, whose population in Guyana has been steadily increasing since 2018. Exploring the lived experiences of Venezuelan migrant workers in the labour market can provide knowledge to mitigate the root causes of exploitation of the migrant population in Guyana.

An interpretative phenomenological method was utilised through semi-structured interviews to gather the stories that shed light on the lived experiences of eight Venezuelan migrant workers residing in Region 4 communities who actively participate in the labour market. This research is significant as it deepens our understanding of how these workers navigate the labour market amidst various forms of exploitation. It also highlights the vulnerabilities and risk factors that make them susceptible to exploitation. Furthermore, it underscores the influence of gender issues on their exploitative experiences. The analysis offers a critical overview of how migrants' legal status and Guyana's legal frameworks can mitigate these issues. It shows that exploitative practices towards migrant workers cannot only be addressed from the top but must include all stakeholders.

Hispanic Immigrants, the Vatican's, and Some US Catholic Bishops' Responses to Trump's 2024 Victory

Dr. Kristi Hislope, University of North Georgia

This conference paper will investigate some of the reactions within the Catholic church to Donald Trump winning the 2024 US presidential election. The paper will report on the Vatican's as well as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' responses and how politics is a dividing force in the church. Specifically, the reaction of Bishop Stowe of the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky, will be discussed and compared to other dioceses such as the Dioceses of Atlanta and Savannah. Bishop Stowe has stated in the past, "The church must be political" (Gehring, 2021). Many in his own diocese and elsewhere disagree with this view calling him too liberal. For advent or the Virgin of Guadalupe celebrations, Bishop Stowe ordered that all priests read a letter in Spanish to the congregation. No translation was provided, and some priests refused to read it with one priest, who wishes to remain anonymous stating, "I don't get it. Why would a Catholic diocese formulate a response and action plan for a purely legal and political issue?" regarding steps illegal immigrants should take if approached by authorities. As the inauguration approaches on January 20th, I will be following this diocese to see if further instructions are given and if backlash or support is given.

PANEL: Undergraduate Student Panel Proposal on Contemporary Politics of Latin America
Dr. Cristian Harris, Faculty Sponsor and Discussant

A Comparison of the Party Systems in Uruguay and Peru and Their Effects

Thomas J. Hageli, University of North Georgia

This paper examines the political party system of Latin America, more specifically, how the different types of political parties can have vastly different effects. It focuses on the cases of Peru and Uruguay because they represent two sharply opposite types of party systems. Uruguay has a well-established and institutionalized party system while Peru is an example of a fragmented party system characterized by personalistic and electoral vehicle parties. This paper reviews the claim that strong, institutionalized party systems are linked to the state capacity to maintain a healthy democracy. It argues that weak party systems are a key factor explaining the current political instability in Latin America. However, there is not sufficient evidence to claim that they are the sole cause of the current problems affecting Latin America.

Strategic Analysis on Mexico's war against the Cartel

Mr. Jorge Romero, University of North Georgia

In 2006, shortly after taking office, President Felipe Calderón launched the infamous Guerra contra el narcotráfico (War Against the Drug trade). Mexico's Federal government implemented heavy military tactics by putting the Mexican Army and Navy in charge of working with local law enforcement with the intent of stopping the drug Cartels. The conjunction of these agencies working together led to a lack of communication, unclear strategies, and ultimately, few operations actually getting off the ground. It also led to violent encounters between the military and the Cartels, claiming the life of many innocent civilians. This project analyzes the military strategy implemented by Mexico's Armed forces to better understand the events that took place, specifically from 2006 to 2012, with the intent to point out failures and successes from Mexico's Military and the Federal Government.

Government Responses to Gang Violence in El Salvador, Mexico, and Ecuador

Christopher Jones, University of North Georgia

This paper focuses on government policies to counter gang violence in Latin America and reviews the cases of El Salvador, Mexico, and Ecuador. Before Bukele took power in June 2019, El Salvador was Latin America's most violent country. He immediately implemented an anti-gang program modeled after a "Mano Dura" approach. What followed was an almost miraculous drop in crime rates. Other countries seem interested in copying El Salvador's approach to gang violence. President Noboa of Ecuador, for example, suggested he would like to implement similar policies. Scholars, however, are less convinced since similar initiatives in other countries, most notably Mexico, resulted in failure after initial positive results. This paper assesses whether El Salvador's policies are the best course of action by providing an in-depth policy analysis and contrasting it to projects tried in Mexico and the potential project in Ecuador. It argues that the "Mano Dura" policies may not be the best path forward, especially because it provides openings for authoritarianism with popular backing.

Sociological, Gender and other Regional Issues**Land, Credit, Conservation: The Spatial Fix in Costa Rica**

Mr. Pablo Arias-Benavides, University of Georgia

Costa Rica is one of the world centers of biodiversity and the first country in the world to reverse deforestation. More than half of the country's territory is under forest cover. Historically, it has been a major supplier of basic agricultural commodities such as beef, bananas, and coffee to the USA as well as a significant regional ally – according to the Office of the United States Trade Representative, U.S. trade with Costa Rica totaled approximately \$23.3 billion in 2022. Its own practices of governance, its relationship to the United States, and its place in geopolitics, are deeply rooted in the countryside where both agriculture and conservation take place. This paper employs the foundational geographic and political economy concept of spatial fix to examine how differing interests – at times competing, and at times collaborating – operated at different scales to produce the country's present circumstances and importance. Spatial fix is a strategy for resolving social and economic crises by moving the operations of industry, production, or capital. After World War II, agricultural expansion was necessary for the livelihood needs of peasant families and also served to establish a commodity base for the nation's entry into global markets. Opening new lands to agriculture in the country's southern territories was a spatial fix at the scale of household and state. Later, Costa Rica became a major recipient of international aid and loans, facilitating the expansion of credit markets and strengthening the role of the US dollar in the global economy: a fix at the regional and international scale. More recently, the country has come into focus as a center for conservation and pioneer in sustainable development, making it a site for a spatial fix at the global scale. Through geographic and historical narrative, I will elucidate the spatial fix concept and demonstrate its utility.

Gendering Resistance: Indigenous Women and Social Uprisings in Ecuador

Ms. Melisa Mantilla, University of Florida

The uprisings of the 20th century, culminating in President Jamil Mahuad's overthrow, solidified the indigenous movement as a key actor in Ecuador's national politics. Following six days of vigorous resistance to the government's neoliberal agenda, a coalition of social groups consisting of indigenous peasants and numerous urban popular sector organizations successfully toppled the government on January 21, 2000. Since then, the indigenous movement has advanced its political project through mass mobilizations, negotiations and dialogue with the government, and participation in the electoral system. In October 2018 and June 2022, Indigenous groups, led by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), joined forces with urban movements—such as labor unions, students, and activists—to organize extensive national protests against the neoliberal austerity and economic policies implemented by Presidents Lenín Moreno and Guillermo Lasso. These mobilizations paralyzed the country through road blockages, marches, and demonstrations. After 10 years of co-optation of popular mobilization and criminalization of protests under Rafael Correa's regime, these uprisings marked a political resurgence of CONAIE as a central force within Ecuador's political landscape. Yet, most analyses and narratives about these events largely overlook the contributions and leadership of Indigenous women in the uprisings. Henceforth, this research uncovers the voices of Indigenous women who participated in and led the 2019 and 2022 uprisings in Ecuador and propose a reexamination of the historicity of the Indigenous social movement, utilizing gender as a key analytical lens.

A systematic review of crime-related casualties and their psychological impact on people in Latin America and the Caribbean

Ms. Sharlotte Baine, Georgia Highlands College

Crime, violence, and homicide are major issues facing the people of Latin America and the Caribbean. The crime rate has adversely impacted the economy, how people live, along with other factors, such as the economic disparities between the classes. These extensively high crime rates are largely due to trafficking drugs and gang-related violence. Moreover, the high rates of deadly violence are positively correlated with access to, as well as, the misuse of firearms, which is higher in these countries than in North America. The problem persists as the citizens of these countries have easy access to firearms from various sources such as homemade, improvised firearms, as well as from the black market. In addition to poor firearm control, Latin America and the Caribbean are the world's primary producers of cocaine. Powerful organizations have control over the drug market, which contributes to the increased homicide rates as well as drug trafficking. This exploratory study examined crime, violence, and homicide from a cross-sectional standpoint among Latin Americans and Caribbean natives. The rates of drug trafficking, gang-related violence, and firearm misuse were assessed and compared to rates in North America.

Innovative Collaborations for Education, Sustainability, and Health: A Partnership Between the University of Georgia (US) and the University of Guadalajara (MX)

Dr. Jorge Rodriguez, University of Georgia, Sandra Jara, UdG, Andrea Arreola, UdG, Sonia Garcia, University of Georgia, and David Stooksbury, University of Georgia

The University of Georgia (UGA) and the University of Guadalajara (UdG) have embarked on a collaborative initiative aimed at addressing critical educational and health challenges through innovative projects. This partnership focuses on three primary areas: the promotion of STEM education in early childhood (K-3), the development of sustainable water collection systems, and the creation of a comprehensive kit to prevent and raise awareness about strokes.

Firstly, the promotion of STEM education targets young learners in kindergarten through third grade. This project aims to foster an early interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics by developing engaging curricula and interactive learning tools. By integrating hands-on activities and real-world applications, the initiative seeks to build a strong foundation in STEM subjects, encouraging future academic and career pursuits in these fields.

Secondly, the collaboration addresses water scarcity issues through the development of efficient water collection systems. This project focuses on designing and implementing sustainable solutions for water harvesting and storage, particularly in regions facing water shortages. The systems are engineered to be cost-effective and environmentally friendly, ensuring accessibility to clean water for communities in need. The initiative also includes educational components to raise awareness about water conservation and management practices.

Lastly, the development of a stroke prevention and awareness kit aims to reduce the incidence and impact of strokes. This kit includes educational materials, tools for early detection, and resources for emergency response. By increasing public awareness and providing practical tools, the project strives to empower individuals and communities to recognize stroke symptoms and take prompt action, ultimately improving health outcomes. Through these collaborative efforts, UGA and UdG are making significant strides in enhancing education, promoting sustainability, and improving public health in US and Latin America. The partnership exemplifies the power of international cooperation in addressing global challenges and fostering positive change.

Regional Political and Social Issues II

The Paradox of Poverty in an Oil Rich Country: The Case of Guyana

Prof. George Danns, University of North Georgia and Dr. Donna Danns, University of North Georgia

An enduring enigma of economic life in the developing country of Guyana is that high rates of poverty remain despite significantly high GDP growth rates ranging between 20 percent and 62 percent over the past 4 years, and a projected 37 percent growth rate in 2024. It is the world's fastest-growing economy following the development of its oil and gas sector and the country has since been reclassified as a high-income nation. Guyana is emerging as a key driver of world petroleum supply growth and is expected to become South America's top oil producer and exporter ahead of neighboring Venezuela and Brazil. The World Bank reported that Guyana's poverty rate is among the highest in the Latin America and Caribbean. This South American country has a population of just under 800,000 and yet, there is seemingly a marked inability to eradicate poverty. In a gesture of caring the Guyana Government has introduced a new measure which will provide a one-off cash grant of Guyana \$100,000 (approximately US\$480) to every citizen aged 18 and above. This paper will interrogate Guyana's persistent poverty in light of its booming economy with a per capita of US\$20,626 up from US\$6,863 in 2020.

Silencing Dissent: Media Bias and Manufacturing Consent in Venezuela's 2024 Post-Election Coverage

Ana Maria Velasquez Pacheco, Furman University

Twelve days after the highly contested 2024 presidential election, tension skyrocketed in Caracas as armored vehicles made their way down Bolivar Avenue after President Maduro announced the ban of X for the next 10 days. This shocking decision sent ripples through national and international communities, where concern grew louder as communication with those still in the country became even less reliable. For many, this decision marked a new frightening chapter in post-election Venezuela. This paper aims to examine media bias in coverage of Venezuela's 2024 presidential elections, with a focus on Nicolás Maduro's controversial action to ban X (Twitter) between August 9th to the 19th after the widespread skepticism regarding Maduro's victory, using Herman and Chomsky's Manufacturing Consent framework. By analyzing how corporate ownership, advertising interests, reliance on elite sources, pressure from power groups, and ideological biases influenced reporting, this study demonstrates the extent to which coverage of Maduro's actions was shaped to fit specific narratives on both sides. The paper applies the Propaganda Model's five filters—Ownership, Advertising, Sourcing, Flak, and Anti-communism—to Venezuelan election coverage, illustrating how these filters foster bias and impact global perceptions.

Through a comparative case study of TVT (Venezolana de Televisión); a state-owned Venezuelan television network that offers news and programming aligned with government perspectives and NTN24 (Nuestra Tele Noticias 24); a Colombian based international news channel that provides a 24/7 coverage on all things Latin America, key differences emerge in language, framing, and narratives, particularly in their portrayal of Maduro's government and election legitimacy. This comparison underscores the framework's concepts of "Worthy and Unworthy Victims" and the framing of Third World elections as "legitimate" or "illegitimate," reflecting the ideological bias embedded within news reporting. The study discusses the broader implications for public opinion, international relations, and Venezuelan democracy, urging critical engagement with media narratives.

This Is Not About Voting Machines: Populist Strategies in Debating Electoral Integrity During Brazil's 2022 Elections

Ms. Thais Zschaber, University of Florida

During his mandate from 2019 to 2022, former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro raised concerns about the insecurity of electronic voting machines, often relying on false information. Throughout his tenure, he repeatedly suggested the possibility of electoral fraud in various ways, creating new challenges for electoral governance institutions in 2022.

Using qualitative content analysis of Bolsonaro's live streams and a right-wing TV program, this study aims to answer the question: What did Bolsonaro and his supporters say about electronic voting machines in 2022, and how does this discussion relate to his broader political strategy? The study seeks to situate Bolsonaro's allegations about electronic voting machines within his populist political rhetoric and his relationship with state institutions. The analysis led to three main conclusions. First, the debates about electronic voting machines were a core element of Bolsonaro's populist strategy, emphasizing his role as a messianic leader and positioning popular support as the primary source of his legitimacy. Second, the content analysis revealed that the arguments about flaws in the electronic voting system were superficial; instead, the dominant claim in 2022 was the existence of a conspiracy against Bolsonaro, with the Superior Electoral Court playing a central role. Finally, the study demonstrates that casting doubt on the voting machines was part of a broader strategy to radicalize opposition against the electoral court and the judiciary as a whole.

Impact of Political Institutions and Social Movement on Mexico's Democratization, 1946-2024 Period

Dr. Clemente Quinones, Georgia Gwinnett College

The purpose of this paper is to test the hypothesis that the radical dissent groups (social movements) and the politico-electoral reforms positively affected Mexico's process of democratization during the 1946-2024. To assess correctly the relative importance of these factors and to reduce any estimation bias in this relative effect, the author includes, in the model, other independent variables related to Modernization Theory that, according to the literature, explains democracy to some extent. To test the hypothesis, a 'radical sociopolitical disturbance coding protocol' to measure the intensity of radical sociopolitical movements is introduced, as well as a scale of permissiveness (partial-comprehensiveness) of politico-electoral reforms. Results indicate that the politico-electoral reforms and the hard core of radical dissent's intensity did affect Mexico's democratization. Contrary to the assumption that modernization affected negatively Mexico's democratization, results demonstrate that indicators of the modernization theory affected positively Mexico's democratization. Limitations and line for future research are presented.

Parent's Child-Rearing Practices and their Effects (Ultimate Determinants of Societies and Cultures)

Mr. Mario Delgado, Retired and Marilyn M. Delgado

The culprits of the repeated collapse of the World's societies are not the elements of corruption, dictatorships, crime, wars, etc. as usually proposed. These are nothing more than symptoms of a causal factor at the reach and control of individual families. We are referring to historical and ongoing child-rearing practices.

The parents' child-rearing practices are the first experiences in life and living to be felt by newborns. These experiences in turn, design and shape the behaviors and emotional tones with which they perceive, interpret and approach life. The infant-child familiarity with them, sustains and shape their realities of life and living, be they pleasurable or painful. Their behavior is not determined through their intellectual and objective evaluation of experiences, but from biased and compromised emotional tones elicited by their conditioning from their parents, i.e., familiar ones.

Therefore, the best and most effective method to promote a constructive evolution, is by teaching the child to listen closely to the quality of the emotions elicited by both their thoughts and actions. Then selecting the ones providing the more fundamental states of pleasurable feelings such as peace, fullness and joy, i.e., fundamental (constructive and absolute) and not just familiar (culture-based and relative) ones. This approach will in addition serve to minimize if not eliminate, the emotional impact from the loss of behavioral familiarity by the adult after retiring. Action's familiarity and its cultural acceptance are seen as normal but are not the key indicators of an absolute emotional superiority.

Day 2

Saturday, February 22, 2025

9:00 – 10:15 am (ET)

Session 4A

Room: 202

PANEL: Sponsored by the journal "Maya America: Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis"

Perspectives on the Indigenous Americas: Past, Present, and Future

Chad Howe, University of Georgia, Juanato Cano, Los Angeles County Schools, Alan LeBaron, Kennesaw State University, and Seaira Lett, University of Georgia

This roundtable discussion will open with short presentations by the moderators followed by open discussion among the presenters and the audience. The panel is sponsored by the journal "Maya America: Journal of Essays, Commentary, and Analysis" which is inviting participants to submit essays for publication into the Volume 7 Issue 1 Spring 2026.

Participants in the roundtable are invited to discuss proposals for publication related to the Indigenous Americas from multiple disciplines and perspectives. Discussion topics could include continent-wide transitions, climate change, resistance movements, economic challenges, language and cultural values, migration and non-migration, just to name a few. Participants are welcome to share their ideas and their questions to obtain comments from the moderators and the roundtable participants. We welcome topics that encourage discussion.

Empowering Maya Communities: Addressing Historical Inequities Through Education, Preservation, and Sustainable Development

Dr. Lilia Lizama-Aranda, Maya Heritage Center

The Maya Heritage Center (MHC) is a US-Mexican non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Maya cultural heritage through community empowerment, education, and sustainable development. Addressing historical inequities, MHC focuses on three key areas: Community Education and Capacity Building, Accessible Academic Excellence, and Global Collaboration. Maya Heritage Center thrives on a community-centric ethos. We believe that true preservation is a collaborative effort, and we actively strive to involve local communities in our projects, whom we serve.

Our programs provide Maya communities with resources to improve literacy, science, and language skills, leverage their cultural heritage for sustainable economic opportunities, locally and globally, and actively participate in research. However, one challenge we observe is the limited access to digital tools within rural communities, which affects our ability to deliver online educational workshops and social media hangouts focused on Maya heritage. Addressing this requires additional resources to ensure equitable access to technology and training. MHC initiatives include an Annual Symposium, a Journal of Maya Heritage, sustainable tourism workshops, and future plans for a Mesoamerican Polytechnic Institute to teach trade careers. Through partnerships, educational programs, and cross-cultural initiatives, we aim to make Maya heritage go beyond geographical borders. The impact of MHC's work is twofold. Locally, our initiatives aim to strengthen community identity, improve educational outcomes, and create sustainable economic opportunities for Maya populations, positioning them as active stewards of their heritage. Globally, by fostering inclusive research and promoting authentic cultural engagement. By investing in community-led education and research, MHC aims to empower Maya communities, preserve cultural practices, and promote global appreciation of Maya heritage for rural sustainable prosperity.

PANEL: Afro-Caribbean Feminist Resistance to Historical Forms of Political, Religious, Psychological, and Geographical Erasure**Mujeres Mariposas: Lessons from Africana Femme Histories in the Time of the Butterflies**

Ms. Sophia De La Cruz, University of Florida (Mellon Scholars Program in the Department of African American Studies)

In the 1930s and 40s, the Afro-Dominican activist and doctor Evangelina Rodríguez faced exclusion from the first national feminist organization in the Dominican Republic: Acción Feminista Dominicana (AFD). Due to her resistance against the despotic dictator Rafael Trujillo, she was not only expelled from AFD—she was also redacted from mainstream history books, seized, tortured and killed without receiving recognition for her outstanding public contributions to healthcare and political growth. Despite the vital role Dominican and Haitian women of African descent have played in shaping history, politics and life in the Dominican Republic, their stories face an erasure that is often intentionally-done to perpetuate false narratives of white superiority and silence the immense impacts of Afro-Dominican people. Afro-Dominican women—particularly those who exhibited defiance and resistance against corruption, violence and authoritarianism—rarely receive the recognition they deserve in public education and common bodies of archival knowledge, their stories either dissolved from the archives or watered down. The following research aims to highlight the political lessons we can learn from the narratives of women like Evangelina Rodríguez who, despite being prevented from participating in mainstream political movements and facing exclusion from the archives, found ways to continue existing and building regardless.

The Tenants of Trinidad and Tobago: Our Structures, Law, and the People

Ms. Chalisa Budhai, University of Florida

Trinidad and Tobago among other Caribbean countries shares a unique relationship with land, ownership, and agency. Through city planning and western doctrines of law, the interaction of culture and people is impacted by physical space. This research begs the question: How have structures, planning, and physical space influenced the development of Caribbean culture in Trinidad and Tobago?

The time period examined in law traverses the 19th and 20th centuries with the Treaty of Amiens brokered by Spain and Britain. While this is a legal analysis, the Afrocentric paradigm and other decolonial praxis are essential in representing the voice of the people in these documents of the Empire. Sources used in this research include properties, maps, laws, and oral history. Land as a form of technology and law informs a unique status quo that is explored throughout these citations.

Land is the foundation that all political, cultural, and economic transactions rest upon. English common law has cemented the role of Trinidadians as permanent tenants of the land. This research asserts the relationship between colonial power and the people's current relationship to land that establishes dynamics between creeds of different Trinidadian people.

Reviving our Roots: Reframing African Diasporic Spirituality for Black Jamaican Women's Identities

Ms. Sophia Williams, University of Florida

Womanist Liberation Theologist Dianne Stewart outlines Christian ideological constructions impacting social and cultural institutions and shaping human experiences. Applications of this theology in the Caribbean and Americas have undermined the legacy of African-derived religions in post-emancipation society, stigmatizing aspects of Jamaican culture with European-derived notions of religiosity. How has the redetermination of African-derived religious practices by womanist liberation theology shaped contemporary Black Jamaican women's identity in the 21st century African Diaspora? Redefining the pathologicalization of African religions in Jamaica provides pathways for Black Jamaican women to reclaim their identity and resist the colonialist destruction of self. In a comparative analysis of ethnographic-historical religious studies of African-centered spiritual practices and traditions through a womanist liberation framework, I argue the utilization of historical African-based practices, such as dreaming, are the pillars of guidance for Jamaican Black women within the contemporary African Diaspora. This pragmatic epistemology is used by Jamaican Black women to navigate life amid oppression, misogynoir, and cultural suppression.

Politics and the Mind: Negative Psychological Effects from Political Oppression on Caribbean Women

Ms. Isabel Cox, University of Florida

The history of Caribbean countries such as Haiti, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic has been characterized by years of political conflict and oppression. While there is extensive analysis of such conflict in anthropological literature, there is little to no analysis of the intersection between gender, psychology, and related incidences of political oppression specifically for Caribbean women. With the inclusion of literature outlining the gender based political oppression of women in the Caribbean countries aforementioned, this paper aims to further analyze the negative psychological effects of such oppression. With a specific focus on three negative psychological impacts including internalized oppression, disempowerment and helplessness, as well as social and emotional isolation, this paper will consider how these factors act as barriers that prevent Caribbean women from advocating for themselves and their rights. Additionally, this paper will discuss the impacts of these barriers on future political activism amongst Caribbean women. By highlighting the psychological impacts of political oppression on Caribbean women, a deeper understanding of their experiences and identities will further add to the discourse on Caribbean feminism as a whole. In the end, the implications of this discussion may influence further research that takes a holistic approach to assessing socio political issues, inclusive of psychological perspectives.

PANEL: Collaborative Impact: Hispanic/Latinx Events at Colleges and Universities**Hispanic Heritage Month Art Exhibition: The Impact of Effective Faculty, Staff, and Student Collaboration**

Dr. Ana Pozzi Harris, Kyle Murphy, Estephanie Perez, Melissa Labra, University of North Georgia

This presentation will explore the planning, organization, and execution of Roots – Hispanic Heritage Month Art Exhibition and its associated events at the University of North Georgia in Fall 2024. These activities achieved a multifaceted goal: celebrating multiculturalism with a focus on Hispanic/Latinx cultures, teaching Latin American and Latinx art history in an academic context, and providing real-world experiential learning within a traditional three-credit course. The leading faculty and staff members in the project, along with two participating students, will share their experiences. Further topics of discussion will include the following: the exhibition theme's broad appeal to both Hispanic and non-Hispanic students; the project's role in fostering connections with regional Latin American artists; and the positive attention received from UNG's higher administration as it seeks Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status.

The Giving Back opportunity: Inspiring students to serve and becoming leaders

Dr. Alvaro Torres-Calderon, University of North Georgia

This essay explores examples in which students are inspired to give back to the community. Interdisciplinary events or projects create spaces to foster community and cultivate leadership skills. Students see practical and productive application of their studies, increasing their views and realizing how profound their impact can be in their surroundings. Mentoring plays a significant part in the process; commitment is also vital to developing opportunities to give back. Serving learning and internship programs are some of the ways to engage students in meaningful service to build confidence, leadership, and civic skills. Whether local or international modalities, they ultimately foster community and break barriers. Being a mentor and a former internship coordinator gave me new views on inspiring students and exploring opportunities to serve the Hispanic community. It is also rewarding to see students who become involved with their community, some of them first-generation Hispanic students who have set goals to serve and give back with their professions.

Cultivating Change: Progress and Challenges in Hispanic/Latinx Initiatives

Professor Maria Jose Maguire, University of North Georgia

In Fall 2024, the University of North Georgia launched a Moonshot initiative with the goal: "By 2030, UNG will become a federally recognized Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), reflecting the communities it serves." The vibrant Hispanic/Latinx community of students, faculty, and staff at UNG is actively engaged across multiple campuses, offering numerous opportunities focused on the growth and success of Hispanics. This presentation takes a look at interdisciplinary approaches, available resources, and sustainability, while also examining the challenges faced along the way. Three events are examined: the Bilingual Health Fair, Latinx Graduation, and Spanish Cultural events, highlighting how these collective events contribute to the institution's development and progress toward its goals, with the community playing a key role in this process.

Linguistics

“Bridging of the gap between us”: Educator Preparation Programs and the Use of Translanguaging in Science Methods Courses

Dr. Sheri Hardee, University of North Georgia, Dr. Max Vazquez Dominguez, University of North Georgia, Melissa Sanchez, University of North Georgia, and Yasmin Trejo, University of North Georgia

We know that students of color, particularly Latinx students, are underrepresented in STEM fields. According to Fry et al. (2021), “Hispanic workers make up 17% of total employment across all occupations, but just 8% of all STEM workers,” and a recent study from the National Science Foundation (NSF) indicated that this number was 15% today. If we are going to change this trajectory, this involves transformation of K12 schooling. As Jackson et al. (2021) stated, “Minoritized students have been historically excluded from STEM learning and engagement in STEM careers.” We argue that the emphasis on developing such K12 spaces starts with training in Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs). Indeed, there is a lack of research focused on the connection between culture and STEM and the creation of spaces where multilingual learners feel they are part of the content they are studying. The ability to create such spaces can occur through the integration of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP) and Linguistically Sustaining Pedagogies (LSP) into STEM pedagogies and content, and it is particularly important that such approaches be interwoven into teacher preparation programs if we want to change the ways in which educators encourage students to participate and have ownership in STEM disciplines. In this presentation, we explore the ways in which one teacher preparation program integrated CSP and LSP into STEM-based pedagogies and mentored teacher candidates through the implementation of these pedagogies through an academic enrichment program for emerging multilingual 4th through 8th grade students, the majority of whom identified as Latinx. This qualitative study highlights the ways in which teacher candidates benefitted from (1) learning about the implementation of translanguaging in the classroom; (2) learning how to build relationships with students and integrate their cultures into the classroom; and (3) growing from the opportunity to co-teach with their peers.

Exploring Space: How English-Portuguese Bilinguals Describe Motion in Writing

Mr. Jean Costa-Silva, University of Georgia and Caroline Schneider, University of Georgia

The notion that all languages convey motion through space is well-established (Slobin, 1996, 2004; Talmy, 2000). However, different encoding strategies can challenge L2 learners moving between typologically distinct languages (Cadierno, 2004, 2017). For example, English, a satellite-framed language, encodes Manner of motion in the verb and Path in prepositional phrases, while Portuguese, a verb-framed language, encodes Path in the verb and Manner in optional adverbial clauses (Talmy, 2000). This typological contrast raises questions about whether L1 transfer and L2 proficiency affect their descriptions.

This study investigates motion event descriptions by bilingual English-Portuguese speakers, focusing on their encoding of Manner and Path. Participants (n=90) included L1-English (n=30), L1-Portuguese (n=16), L2 English (n=24), and L2 Portuguese speakers (n=20). They watched 15 video clips of dynamic motion events and wrote descriptions. Responses were analyzed for Manner bias (relative frequency of Manner verbs, Manner-Path verbs, Manner adverbial clauses, and Manner adverbs) and Path elaboration (use of Path prepositions and Path verbs). Linear mixed-effect regressions showed that English monolinguals exhibited a high Manner bias ($\beta=1.09$, $p<.01$), often using Manner verbs ($\beta=0.935$, $p<.01$) and Path prepositions ($\beta=1.21$, $p<.01$). Portuguese monolinguals showed less Manner bias ($\beta=-0.462$, $p<.01$), using fewer Manner verbs ($\beta=-0.519$, $p<.01$) and more Path verbs ($\beta=0.357$, $p<.01$). L2 English speakers demonstrated reduced Manner elaboration (Elementary: $\beta=-0.337$, $p<.02$; Intermediate: $\beta=-0.183$, $p<.01$) and lower Path preposition use (Elementary: $\beta=-0.820$, $p<.01$). L2 Portuguese speakers showed more Manner verbs than Portuguese monolinguals (Elementary: $\beta=0.242$, $p<.01$; Intermediate: $\beta=0.201$, $p<.01$). These results underscore the challenges in acquiring L2 motion-encoding strategies and highlight the need for targeted instruction to help learners develop native-like descriptions.

Heritage language speakers of Spanish and literacy

Dr. Daniel Smith, Clemson University

Spanish English contact data reveal that Spanish is used in large part by first generation Hispanic immigrants to the United States but that their children and future generations use mostly English, except in the home with their parents; they are often referred to as heritage language speakers. Current school curricula not only generally ignore this discrepancy in favor of English, but are, with very few exceptions, in large part responsible for the demise of Spanish past the first generation of immigrants. This study describes approaches to increase and fortify the use of oral Spanish among heritage language speakers and strategies to increase literacy in Spanish with consequent support for literacy in English so that learning to read and write in one language will support reading in writing in the other language. Conclusions will be drawn from other researchers' studies in heritage language and bilingual literacy studies in combination with my own first-hand observations of heritage language speakers in the home, school, and church settings in small town and rural Northeast Georgia.

Arts, Language and Literature III**Performance Encinta: The Violence of Pregnancy in the Works of Regina José Galindo***Ms. Zoe Lawrence, Furman University*

For the past thirty years, gender and sexual violence have been at the center of political discussions in Latin America. Performance art, defined by Diana Taylor as “a process, a praxis ... a mode of transmission ... a means of intervening in the world” (2016) has become an effective tool to both render visible and resist these violences that affect women and their bodies, including femicide, gyneco-obstetric violence (OGV), rape, and economic precarity.

In this paper, I will analyze the work of Guatemalan performance artist Regina José Galindo. As a prominent Latin American performance artist and feminist, Galindo has confronted her audiences with vulnerability and honesty about women’s situation in Latin America for the last 25 years. I will focus on Galindo’s understudied works *Carnada* (2006), *Un espejo para la pequeña muerte* (2006), and *Mientras, ellos siguen libres* (2007), in which Galindo, pregnant herself, displays the violence of pregnancy in the context of Latin American womanhood. Through these performances, I will study how female fertility and pregnancy are at the center of masculine violence against women. I will show that pregnancy in Galindo’s work is re/presented as both a “blessing and a terror”—a birth of something new, but also a site of violence and dysphoria. By producing these tensions in her work, Galindo resists the history of violence against Latin American women, daring her audience to face their own complicity in structural violence.

A Translator's Trajectory*Professor Gordon McNeer, University of North Georgia*

Over the years I have had the honor of translating the works of top-tier Spanish language poets from three continents. Beginning with *Cuaderno de Nueva York / New York Notebook*, the Cervantes Prize work by Spanish laureate José Hierro in 1998, my translations include works by Alí Calderón (Premio Carlos Pellicer 2024), Andrea Cote (Premio Casa de America 2024), Jorge Galán (Premio Real Academia Española 2016), Raquel Lanseros (Premio Nacional de la Crítica 2019), Benjamín Prado (Premio del Tren “Antonio Machado”) 2020, Elvira Sastre (Premio Biblioteca Breve 2019) and, most recently Fernando Valverde, whose work *The Men Who Killed My Mother*, is scheduled for release by Swan Isle Press on April 18th of 2025. For this presentation I would like to read translations of representative poems from these authors while commenting on some of the challenges to their translation that I have encountered along the way.

English Proficiency and the Success of Immigrant Musicians in the COVID 19-Era in the United States: Focusing on Latino Immigrant Musicians with the Potential Issues*Dr. Ying Zhen, Wesleyan College and Cameron M. Weber, Independent Scholar*

This paper explores the factors that affect the economic success of immigrant Musicians in terms of hourly wage during the Covid 19 era, using data from the 2021 American Community Survey, where musicians are defined as those who make their living from income derived from music-making: musicians and singers, music directors and composers, namely. The analysis demonstrates the importance of union membership on hourly wage for immigrant musicians, and English proficiency’s effect on hourly wage is minimal. Quantile regression approach is adopted to examine the effects of English proficiency’s effects across the entire earnings distribution. For both full/male/female samples, there is no heterogeneous effects of English proficiency across Earnings distributions. However, for immigrant musicians at the 50th hourly wage percentile, an additional year of education would increase hourly wage by 57.5%.

When looking at the Latino immigrant musicians, the results suggest the importance of education and union membership on hourly wage for Latino musicians, and English proficiency’s effect on hourly wage is minimal. However, for union members, fluency in English would increase the hourly wage by 5.8%, although the corresponding coefficients are insignificant. Quantile regression approach is adopted to examine the effects of English proficiency’s effects across the entire earnings distribution. The relative importance of English proficiency is greater at the upper tier of the earnings distribution for Latino male musicians with a union membership: fluency in English is associated with a 3% increase in hourly wage for Latino male unionized musicians at the 50th hourly wage percentile, while such

a premium is 26% for those at the 75th hourly wage percentile. This pattern does not apply to Latino female musicians. For Latino female musicians, educational attainment would contribute to their earnings, while marriage plays a negative role.

However, potential issues exist for the study. The major issue is that the secondary data sources poorly capture the behavior of musicians, who earn multiple revenue streams and work often on the fringes of society. Also, how an artist is defined and how the survey data are used to study artist behavior are a cornerstone of cultural economics. Frey and Pommerehne (1989) list eight criteria for identifying an artist, from time spent on and income derived from artmaking, to reputation and recognition, organizational membership and professional qualifications. Therefore, we also take a radically subjective approach where we use only the last of their categories, artist self-identification, to attempt a theoretical advancement in art economics. A grassroots snowball survey on musicians were conducted from January to August 2022, which further explores the impact of English proficiency on musicians. It shows that labor union cohort says English proficiency is more important than other cohorts; however, this is not the case for immigrant musicians.

La peor adicción del dolor

Ms. Susana Olivo Sandoval, University of North Georgia

Este ensayo se enfoca en el dolor como una experiencia sensorial inseparable de la vida humana, capaz de influir profundamente en las emociones y decisiones. El ensayo explora cómo el dolor interno, en contraste con el dolor físico, puede llevar a decisiones autodestructivas, como el abuso de sustancias. Para informar sobre el tema, utilizo el cuento *El infierno artificial* por Horacio Quiroga, donde se muestra cómo las adicciones pueden surgir como un mecanismo de escape en cara del sufrimiento. A través del análisis literario se examinan aspectos como el estilo narrativo, los movimientos literarios modernista y vanguardista que influyen en la obra, y los temas recurrentes en la literatura de Quiroga, como la muerte y la crítica social. Además, el ensayo reflexiona sobre cómo las imágenes literarias y la construcción de personajes transmiten las consecuencias del dolor y la adicción. Finalmente, el análisis destaca el mensaje profundo de Quiroga sobre los ciclos de sufrimiento y la incapacidad de las drogas para proporcionar alivio verdadero, trazando enigmas sobre las dinámicas sociales y emocionales en torno al dolor humano.

Apruebo o Rechazo: Mobilizing Traditions in the Songs For and Against Chile's 2022 Draft Constitution

Dr. Eunice Rojas, Furman University

On September 4, 2022, Chileans went to the polls to vote on a draft constitution several years in the making. Written by a Constitutional Convention composed of 155 citizens directly elected over a year earlier with requirements for gender parity and indigenous representation, the draft and the electoral process to decide its fate represented the culmination of three years of societal tension that had begun with a massive social upheaval in the final months of 2019. Protesters demanding the rollback of a metro fare hike were quickly joined by others denouncing income inequality, privatization in the pension and health systems, and a heavy-handed state response to territorial disputes with the indigenous Mapuche population in southern Chile, among a myriad of other issues. Protesters united in their demands for the resignation of President Sebastián Piñera, their critiques of the neoliberal economic system, and their calls to replace the constitution enacted thirty years earlier during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet.

Both during the 2019-2020 protests themselves and during the campaigns for and against the draft constitution in the lead-up to the September 2022 plebiscite, music played a role in shaping Chileans' perceptions of the issues in play. Employing the theoretical lens of Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison's work on the role of music in social movements, this paper examines several songs both in support of and in rejection of the failed 2022 draft constitution with regard to how they seek to mobilize traditions in an effort to sway public opinion.

Teaching Paradigms: Inter-cultural Perspectives and Innovative Solutions**Panel Discussion: International Healthcare Differences and Their Impact: Gaining Experience Through Study Away Programming**

Mr., Evan Sinclair, Sarah Pyles, Rishabh Rege, Adhavan Subramaniam, Ella Darby, Riya Ratkalkar
University of Georgia.

Panel Moderated by Dr. Amy Baldwin, AU/UGA Medical Partnership

Through the University of Georgia's Health in Belize Program, pre-health students gain firsthand experience in healthcare systems within an international context. This unique opportunity allows students to shadow local clinicians, attend insightful guest lectures, engage with rural medical volunteers, and discuss various healthcare topics with peers. Twenty-two students were chosen for the 2023 3-week program, which allowed for interactive and intimate experiences at various departments of La Loma Luz Hospital in San Ignacio, where the majority of shadowing took place. Guest lectures from Belizean government officials, nurses, and other medical personnel enriched students' understanding of healthcare in Belize and allowed for a wide range of healthcare topics to be discussed. Access to rural communities, as well as personal and financial barriers to healthcare were discussed and directly observed, providing a more comprehensive understanding of Belizean healthcare. Maintaining journal entries on day-to-day experiences promoted reflection and deeper understanding to integrate all learning experiences. This reflective process helped to compare and contrast the practical and cultural aspects of healthcare observed with experiences of the US healthcare system. We are immensely grateful to the Belizean people for their generosity, compassion, and willingness to share their knowledge and experiences. Their openness has helped shape the way students approach healthcare in diverse settings. In this session, students and faculty will discuss their experiences, insights, reflections and effects of participating in this study away program, including how it has impacted their paths to becoming healthcare professionals.

Bridging Borders: Enhancing Academic Collaboration and Student Mobility through the UGA-Latin America Exchange Program

Dr. Jorge Rodriguez, University of Georgia, David Stooksbury, University of Georgia, Sonia Garcia, University of Georgia, Felix Santiago-Collejo, University of Georgia, and Jorge I Rodriguez-Devora, University of Georgia

The University of Georgia (UGA) has initiated a dynamic exchange program in collaboration with the Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro (UAQ) in Mexico, the Universidad de Puerto Rico en Mayagüez (UPRM), and the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico (PUPR). This program is designed to foster academic collaborations and enhance student mobility between the United States and Latin America. The primary objective of this exchange program is to promote cross-cultural academic partnerships and provide students with enriching international experiences. By facilitating the exchange of students and faculty, the program aims to broaden educational perspectives, enhance research opportunities, and build lasting academic networks.

Participants in the program will engage in a variety of academic activities, including joint research projects, collaborative coursework, and cultural immersion experiences. These activities are intended to deepen understanding of diverse academic disciplines and cultural contexts, thereby enriching the educational experience for all involved. The program also emphasizes the importance of language acquisition and cultural competency. Students will have the opportunity to improve their language skills and gain a deeper appreciation of the cultural nuances of their host countries. This aspect of the program is crucial for preparing students to thrive in an increasingly globalized world. Through this exchange program, UGA, UAQ, UPRM, and PUPR are committed to creating a vibrant academic community that transcends borders. By promoting academic collaborations and increasing student mobility, the program seeks to cultivate a generation of globally-minded scholars and professionals who are equipped to address the challenges of the 21st century.

Designing an Open-Access Course on Latin American Culture and Civilization

Dr. Luis Mora, Georgia Gwinnett College

This presentation discusses the design and development of a free course on Latin American culture and civilization's impact and the impact that this course has had on democratizing knowledge and forming an inclusive world identity. The presentation focuses on the choice of content that represents the historical, artistic, and social reality of each nation; the availability of the platform; and the use of innovative teaching materials, including multimedia content and activities. Therefore, the presentation aims to promote understanding and respect for the Latin American culture through an open-source approach to education and an inclusive pedagogy.

LAC Environment and Health

Mapping Compound Inundation along Puerto Rico's Coastal Watersheds: A Practical Approach

Mr. Orlando Vioria, University of Georgia, and Felix Santiago-Collazo, University of Georgia

Hurricanes cause major economic and human losses, primarily due to flooding. Increasing hurricane intensity and slower movement after landfall lead to prolonged rainfall and more flooding. This underscores the need for better flood forecasting using advanced modeling techniques to support risk mitigation. Island-scale flood modeling can improve forecasts in areas prone to extreme events. The Caribbean Islands, a key hurricane path in the Atlantic, lack sufficient flood modeling, affecting local hazard predictions. Current models require extensive data and computational resources, limiting their effectiveness.

This study introduces a new rainfall flood modeling framework to be tested in about 69% of Puerto Rico's coastal watersheds. The framework will (a) estimate rainfall from synthetic hurricanes, (b) identify affected watersheds, and (c) develop relationships between river geometry and watershed characteristics to address data gaps. It will use physics-based models like GSSHA and SWMM, executed automatically for each storm and basin using High-Performance Computing.

The goal is to create inundation maps for various hurricane categories and make them accessible via a web platform for community and government use. Future work will combine these maps with storm surge data to determine total water depth during combined events. This approach could be a vital planning tool for stakeholders in hurricane-prone insular areas, including the Caribbean.

Green solutions for gray spaces: building flood resilience through community engagement in São Paulo City, Brazil

Ms. Luciana Iannone-Tarcha, University of Georgia and Dr. Santiago-Collazo, University of Georgia

Around 12% of the world's freshwater resources are in Brazilian lands. However, significant impacts in hydrologic dynamics are expected due to climate change, especially in highly disordered urbanized areas like São Paulo City, which has suffered extreme flood events and water pollution. Over the years, various projects and initiatives have been undertaken to manage flood hazards and water quality of the Tietê River, which is the main river that runs through the city. However, besides gray infrastructure and superficial green approaches, Nature-based Solutions (NbS) have not yet been studied or applied in this system. Thus, this study aims to determine how these features can be applied to densely urbanized river floodplains to develop efficient, sustainable, and resilient systems with the communities' help. First, we assessed local needs through interviews, community walks, participatory mapping, and validation exercises to collect data to understand flood exposure, impacts, and flood dynamics for frequent and extreme events. This community knowledge was integrated into developing a flood sensor network for collecting urban flood data. Then, a hydrodynamic model was developed for the study area, which included overland and riverine flows using pluvial and fluvial drivers. The proposed NbS, such as levee setbacks, floodplain storage, and pocket parks, were introduced into the model to assess their performance. Finally, a multicriteria decision analysis was used to determine the best combination of solutions, which will target the community's needs and challenges from a holistic perspective. Most Latin Americans face similar challenges related to past and recent political, economic, social, and environmental mismanagement. Therefore, our responsibility as academics is to share knowledge and enhance applicability to transform the world's extensive and complex system into a resilient and sustainable one that can endure future challenges.

Prevalence of asthma-related symptoms and bronchodilation response in five-year-old children in rural Guatemala from the Household Air Pollution Intervention Network cohort

Mrs. Laura Grajeda, University of Georgia and John McCracken, University of Georgia

In Latin America and the Caribbean, physician-diagnosed asthma is the third leading cause of disability-adjusted life years in children. However, the burden might be underestimated due to barriers to healthcare access and the low availability of age-appropriate lung function techniques in these settings. We aim to estimate the prevalence of asthma-related symptoms and reversibility of airway flow limitation using bronchodilation.

Cross-sectional household survey of children living in rural Guatemala who participated in the Household Air Pollution Intervention Network (HAPIN) randomized trial. HAPIN aims to study the health effects of reducing household air pollution through an intervention with a liquefied petroleum gas cookstove and fuel supplied from mid-gestation to age 1 year, compared to continuing to cook on open fire. Here we report the lung health assessment conducted in the 5-year-old data collection wave. A study nurse assessed cough, audible wheezing, and stridor; asked the caregiver for cough in the last 14 days; and measured respiratory rate. Airway obstruction and lung compliance were assessed by respiratory oscillometry. Variable expiratory airflow limitation was defined as a 40% decrease in obstruction, a 50% increase in compliance, or an 80% decrease in the frequency dependence of compliance after bronchodilation with 100 mcg salbutamol.

Of 519 HAPIN children living in the study area, 504 (98%) consented to participate, and 483 (96%) were visited. Children had a mean (standard deviation) age of 5 (0.1) years, 270 (54%) were male, 476 (99%) had a physical examination, and 449 (93%) had a bronchodilation response test. The prevalence of cough, stridor, and tachypnea was 25% (n=123), 0.2% (n=1), and 1.3% (n=6), respectively. None had an audible wheeze. A bronchodilator responsiveness was observed in 3% (n=14), 6 accompanied by symptoms.

The high prevalence of cough and the detection of airway flow limitation warrants further evaluation of asthma in this population. Respiratory oscillometry was shown to be a feasible pulmonary function test for use in children in rural settings that could detect additional suspected cases of asthma.

Burden of Diarrheal Infections in Guatemala: Insights from the Vigilancia Integrada Comunitaria (VICo) Surveillance System

Ranni Tewfik, Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, University of Georgia

Diarrheal diseases are a leading cause of child mortality and morbidity globally, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Recent data provide evidence of a high burden of diarrheal infections in Guatemala, where viral and bacterial pathogens account for most cases, especially among children younger than five years. Operating in the Santa Rosa and Quetzaltenango departments since 2008, VICo (Vigilancia Integrada Comunitaria) was established in collaboration with Guatemala's Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a hospital- and clinic-based surveillance system for diarrheal, respiratory, and febrile syndromes. By collecting epidemiological data and stool samples for bacterial, viral, and parasitic analysis, VICo aims to deliver essential information for early outbreak detection, public health planning, and disease control interventions. This presentation focuses on the burden and etiology of diarrheal syndromes summarized by VICo. From 2008 to 2012, VICo reported an incidence of 659 cases of diarrhea per 10,000 persons per year, with young children experiencing an incidence rate more than twice as high. Norovirus, rotavirus, and diarrheagenic *Escherichia coli* were among the prevalent pathogens, highlighting the critical need for targeted public health interventions. Integrating the recent findings from VICo with national health systems in Guatemala may improve resource allocation and help address health disparities across population groups. However, relevant knowledge gaps remain regarding risk factors, pathogen-specific impacts on disease severity, and long-term health outcomes associated with diarrheal diseases in Guatemala and similar settings. Future research priorities should include evaluating intervention efficacy, expanding surveillance to cover broader populations, and enhancing laboratory capacity for rapid pathogen detection.

The outcomes of a collaborative integrated surveillance system (VICo) for acute respiratory infections in Guatemala

Ms. Sadaf Jehangir, University of Georgia and John P. McCracken, University of Georgia

Guatemala is a developing country with high mortality in both children and adults. Infectious diseases including acute respiratory infections (ARI) are a major cause of illness and death in Guatemala. Although these illnesses were known to cause high burden for years, due to lack of standardized case definitions and test diagnosis, the specific information about the burden and responsible etiologies remained largely unknown. A population-based sentinel surveillance system (VICo) with active case finding, standardized case definitions, and improved diagnostic laboratory was established to fill some gaps in knowledge about these diseases. The data from VICo has confirmed the high burden of ARIs predominantly caused by viruses including influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), adenovirus, parainfluenza virus and human metapneumovirus. The incidence rate and severity of ARIs was higher in children <1 year of age and adults ≥65 years of age. These data also demonstrated variability in seasonality and timing of influenza and RSV epidemics in Guatemala which makes it difficult to precisely predict onset of seasonal epidemics of these viruses. These findings have provided information for implementation of new interventions and led to planning and evaluation of public health policies in Guatemala to comply with the International Health Regulations. However, the impact of interventions such as pneumococcal vaccines remains to be determined.

Assessing the Compensation Methods of the HAPIN Clinical Trial: A Case Study of Guatemala

Mrs. Ashley Oloke-Ehsuan, University of Georgia

The HAPIN (Household Air Pollution Intervention Network) trial is a large-scale, multi-country, randomized controlled trial aimed at addressing the global health burden of household air pollution (HAP). HAP, primarily caused by cooking with solid fuels such as wood and charcoal, is a major contributor to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and child mortality, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

At the Guatemala study site, the intervention involved distributing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) stoves and free fuel to rural households, replacing traditional cooking methods. Over 3,000 pregnant women and their families participated, with researchers assessing pregnancy outcomes, child growth, respiratory health, air quality, and the adoption of LPG technology. Participants in the control group, who continued using traditional cooking methods, were provided with a thoughtfully designed compensation strategy to ensure fairness and uphold ethical standards.

Control group participants received vouchers equivalent to the value of the LPG stoves and fuel. These vouchers could be redeemed for household appliances, cookware, kitchen tools, and furniture, such as mattresses and dining sets. This compensation strategy aimed to maintain equity, incentivize participation, and minimize potential disparities between groups.

Studying the design and impact of the HAPIN compensation strategy is critical for advancing clinical research as a whole. Compensation not only ensures ethical balance but also influences participant engagement, compliance, and the validity of study findings. By evaluating the strengths and limitations of the Guatemala site's approach, this research seeks to enhance the interpretation of trial outcomes and provide actionable insights for future studies.

The goals of this study include improving the design of compensation strategies, understanding how the intervention influenced behavioral changes in the LPG group, The HAPIN (Household Air Pollution Intervention Network) trial is a large-scale, multi-country, randomized controlled trial aimed at addressing the global health burden of household air pollution (HAP). HAP, primarily caused by cooking with solid fuels such as wood and charcoal, is a major contributor to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and child mortality, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

At the Guatemala study site, 800 households were recruited. The intervention involved distributing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) stoves and free fuel to rural households, replacing traditional cooking methods. Over 3,000 pregnant women and their families participated, with researchers assessing pregnancy outcomes, child growth, respiratory health, air quality, and the adoption of LPG technology. Participants in the control group, who continued using traditional cooking methods, were provided with a thoughtfully designed compensation strategy to ensure fairness and uphold ethical standards.

Control group participants received vouchers equivalent to the value of the LPG stoves alone, excluding the fuel. These vouchers could be redeemed for household appliances, cookware, kitchen tools, and furniture, such as mattresses and dining sets. This compensation strategy aimed to maintain equity, incentivize participation, and minimize potential disparities between groups.

Studying the design and impact of the HAPIN compensation strategy is critical for advancing clinical research as a whole. Compensation not only ensures ethical balance but also influences participant engagement, compliance, and the validity of study findings. By evaluating the strengths and limitations of the Guatemala site's approach, this research seeks to enhance the interpretation of trial outcomes and provide actionable insights for future studies.

The goals of this study include improving the design of compensation strategies, understanding how control compensation can influence the causal question addressed by a field trial, and offering recommendations to optimize equity and participant experience in clinical trials worldwide.

12:30 pm: Lunch – GEORGE HALL

Announcement & Presentation of Student Paper Competition Award Winners

CONFERENCE ON THE AMERICAS

Closing Plenary

1:30 pm to 2:30 pm: GEORGE HALL

Co-Chairs: *Dr. Chad Howe (University of Georgia), Dr. Donna Danns (University of North Georgia) & Dr. Amy Baldwin (Augusta University/University of Georgia Medical Partnership)*

Remarks: *Dr. Donna Danns, University of North Georgia*

Introduction of Plenary Speaker: *Dr. Amy Baldwin, Professor, AU/UGA Medical Partnership*

-Vote of Thanks-

Co-Chair: *Dr. Amy Baldwin, AU/UGA Medical Partnership*



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