

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

Sponsored by:

The Americas Council, University System of Georgia

University of Georgia

University of North Georgia

Georgia Southern University

Georgia State University Perimeter College

University of West Georgia



Hosted by:

The Provost's Office, University of Georgia

Augusta University / University of Georgia Medical Partnership

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
Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL
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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

28th Annual Conference on the Americas

DAY 1

Friday, February 21, 2025

**Check-in at Registration Desk: George Hall from 12:30 pm
Session Rooms: 2nd Floor of Russell Hall**

1:15 – 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

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

Ms. Cassandra Hunt, Clemson University

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

Mr. Michel Soares do Carmo, University of Georgia

1:15 – 2:30 pm (ET)

Session 1B

Room: 205

History, Ethnographic and Archeological Science (Moderator: Georgeta Connor)

Puerto Ricans' Resistance to American Imperialism from the Americans' Perspective

Dr. Ligia Domenech, Columbus State University

“¡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

The Religious Factor and Life Satisfaction in Guyana

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

Languages, cultures and identities: Study abroad HBCU student experiences

Dr. Irina Tedrick, University of South Carolina, Sumter

Coffee Break and Poster Presentations

2:30pm - 3:15pm: GEORGE HALL

2:30 – 3:15 pm Poster Presentations
GEORGE HALL

Socioeconomic Challenges facing by Afrocolombian women
Mrs. Ana Maria Ramirez-Gomez, University of Florida

Investigating the Value of Shadowing Healthcare Professionals in Belize
Professor Amy Medlock, University of Georgia

Consequences of unrepaired clinically diagnosed craniosynostosis in an individual with craniofrontalnasal 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

Increasing Healthcare Accessibility through Partnership in the Caribbean
Ms. Tajah Damm, AU/UGA Medical Partnership of the Medical College of Georgia

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

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

3:15 – 4:30 pm (ET)

Session 2A

Room: 202

Arts, Language and Literature II

Entomological Collectivities: Insects, biopolitics, and the representation of “monstrous populations” in Latin America

Dr. Santiago Quintero, Furman University

A Theatrical Life in Matías Piñeiros’ Film Series Las Shakespearidas

Dr. Derek Beaudry, University of North Georgia

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

También la lluvia: El impacto duradero de la explotación colonial

Hayden Roof, Clemson University

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

Prof. Magdalena Matuskova, Clemson University

3:15 – 4:30 pm (ET)

Session 2B

Room: 205

Regional Geographical and Climate Issues I (Moderator: Irina Tedrick)

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

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

Julius Popper: A Jewish Romanian Explorer in Tierra del Fuego

Dr. Georgeta Connor, Georgia Gwinnett College

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

3:15 – 4:30 pm (ET)

Session 2C

Room: 217

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

“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

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

Ms. Kirly Bacchus, University of Guyana

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

Dr. Kristi Hislope, University of North Georgia

4:45 – 6:00 pm (ET)

Session 3A

Room: 202

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

Strategic Analysis on Mexico's war against the Cartel

Mr. Jorge Romero, University of North Georgia

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

Christopher Jones, University of North Georgia

4:45 – 6:00 pm (ET)

Session 3B

Room: 205

Sociological, Gender and other Regional Issues (Moderator: Pablo Arias-Benavides)

Land, Credit, Conservation: The Spatial Fix in Costa Rica

Mr. Pablo Arias-Benavides, University of Georgia

Gendering Resistance: Indigenous Women and Social Uprisings in Ecuador

Ms. Melisa Mantilla, University of Florida

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

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

4:45 – 6:00 pm (ET)

Session 3C

Room: 217

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

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

Ana Maria Velasquez Pacheco, Furman University

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

Ms. Thais Zschaber, University of Florida

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

Dr. Clemente Quinones, Georgia Gwinnett College

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

Mr. Mario Delgado, Retired and Marilyn M. Delgado

CONFERENCE RECEPTION

6:00pm - 7:30pm: GEORGE HALL

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

Maya and the Catholic Church in the United States: Can people remain Maya and Catholic at the same time?

Juan Cano, Los Angeles County Schools

My favorite essays from the journal Maya America: an introduction to the journal's mission and objectives

Alan LeBaron, Kennesaw State University

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

Dr. Lilia Lizama-Aranda, Maya Heritage Center

Chuj (Mayan) variation and diaspora: Implications for preservation

Seaira Lett, University of Georgia

9:00 – 10:15 am (ET)

Session 4B

Room: 205

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)

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

Ms. Chalisa Budhai, University of Florida

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

Ms. Sophia Williams, University of Florida

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

Ms. Isabel Cox, University of Florida

9:00 – 10:15 am (ET)

Session 4C

Room: 217

PANEL: Collaborative Impact: Hispanic/Latinx Events at Colleges and Universities

(Moderator: Kyle Murphy)

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

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

Dr. Alvaro Torres-Calderon, University of North Georgia

Cultivating Change: Progress and Challenges in Hispanic/Latinx Initiatives

Professor Maria Jose Maguire, University of North Georgia

9:00 – 10:15 pm (ET)

Session 4D

Room: 228

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

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

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

Heritage language speakers of Spanish and literacy

Dr. Daniel Smith, Clemson University

10:15 – 10:45 am

COFFEE BREAK

Room 228

10:45 – 12:15 pm (ET)

Session 5A

Room: 202

Arts, Language and Literature III (Moderator: Alvaro M. Torres-Calderón)

Performance Encinta: The Violence of Pregnancy in the Works of Regina José Galindo

Ms. Zoe Lawrence, Furman University

A Translator's Trajectory

Professor Gordon McNeer, University of North Georgia

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

La peor adicción del dolor

Ms. Susana Olivo Sandoval, University of North Georgia

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

Dr. Eunice Rojas, Furman University

10:45 – 12:15 pm (ET)

Session 5B

Room: 205

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

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

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

Dr. Luis Mora, Georgia Gwinnett College

10:45 – 12:15 pm (ET)

Session 5C

Room: 217

LAC Environment and Health (Moderator: Ed Sperr)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mrs. Ashley Oloke-Ehsuan, University of Georgia

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*



28th Annual Conference on the Americas

Silent Entry: How the malaria causing parasites invade human red blood cells

Saturday, February 22, 2025 | 1:30 – 2:30 PM

Health Sciences Campus, George Hall
Open to All – Registration not required to attend



Dr. Vasant Muralidharan grew up among scientists on the campus of the Bhabha Atomic Research Center in Mumbai, India. He studied chemistry and microbiology at the University of Mumbai, graduating at the top of his class. For his Masters in Biotechnology at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, Vasant studied protein folding and dynamics. Vasant earned his PhD working on synthetic protein chemistry and biophysics with Prof. Tom Muir at the Rockefeller University in New York. For his postdoctoral training, he studied the biology of the malaria-causing parasite, *Plasmodium falciparum* with Prof. Dan Goldberg at the Washington University School of Medicine in

St. Louis. After finishing his postdoctoral training, Vasant was recruited to the faculty of the Department of Cellular Biology and Center for Tropical & Emerging Global Diseases at the University of Georgia. Vasant is an expert on *Plasmodium* cell biology and molecular genetics. The Muralidharan lab studies the cellular biology of *Plasmodium falciparum*, the lethal human malaria parasite.

Malaria has the dubious distinction of being one of the oldest known and deadliest diseases of humans, and it continues to have a devastating impact on human health today, remaining a leading cause of childhood mortality in tropical regions of the world. Clinical disease is a direct consequence of the remarkable ability of parasites from the genus *Plasmodium* to grow and thrive in human red blood cells (RBCs). The RBC is a unique cell type that lacks any organelles and is little more than a repository for the metalloprotein hemoglobin, making it a hostile and barren cellular environment. The malaria parasites are unique in their ability to invade and then completely remodel RBCs into a cell specialized for their growth and development. We have a notably incomplete understanding of the complex molecular mechanisms driving this dramatic and clinically consequential repurposing of RBCs. Understanding these processes will provide us with the means to develop more effective drugs and vaccines against malaria. Vasant, together with his research team at UGA are investigating how the parasite establishes its intracellular niche within the RBC. Vasant's lab utilizes molecular genetics, cell biology, and biochemistry to study the biological mechanisms driving malaria.

In addition to his research, Vasant teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in cell biology and parasitology. He has mentored several graduate students and postdoctoral trainees. All the students mentored by Vasant have continued as scientists after graduation at UT Southwestern Medical Center, National Institutes of Health (NIH), Food & Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control, Iowa State University, and the Gulbenkian Institute of Molecular Medicine in Lisbon, Portugal. His trainees are also tenure-track faculty at other universities such as Clemson University, SC and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. Students from Dr. Muralidharan's lab have also been awarded external fellowships, such as the ARCS Foundation Global Impact Award, NIH T32 awards, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Gilliam Fellowship.

The Americas Council provides an annual conference for presenters and participants to explore critical socio-cultural, political, economic, environmental, global, regional and national issues including the challenges and opportunities facing Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada.

Scan the code below for more information or to register for the conference



Conference Site: Miller Learning Center, UGA, 48 Baxter Street, Athens, GA 30602

For further information, please contact:

Dr. Amy Baldwin: baldwina@uga.edu

Dr. Donna Danns: donna.danns@ung.edu

Dr. Chad Howe: chowe@uga.edu



-Vote of Thanks-

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



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Last revised: 02/20/2025



UNIVERSITY OF
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Health Sciences
Campus Map

Summer 2021

LEGEND

- UGA Buildings
- UGA Property
- Parking Areas
- Sidewalks
- Recreation Areas
- ACC Buildings

