

The American Studies Newsletter

Letter from the Chair, Dr. Alex Lubin

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I returned to UNM this Fall after a three year leave of absence from UNM. During my leave I directed an American Studies center at the American University of Beirut (AUB). The AUB is one of the oldest “American” institutions in the Middle East. It was founded by protestant missionaries from

Massachusetts in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Many of the missionaries to Mt. Lebanon had engaged in similar missionary work on the U.S. frontier, and they regularly compared their experiences “converting” American Indians to their experiences with Arab Ottomans.

The AUB was the ideal venue to develop my conception of the possibilities of transnational American Studies, particularly in the decades following the Cold War. The linkages between U.S. territorial expansion on the North American continent and globally were starkly visible in Beirut and on the campus of the AUB. While in Beirut I completed my second monograph, *Geographies of Liberation: The Making of an Afro Arab Political Imaginary*, which I hope demonstrates what transnational American Studies is and can be.

While American Studies scholars in the U.S. are forever concerned about the “marketability” of our discipline, especially in an age of growing joblessness, across the Middle East the field of American

Studies has experienced growth. This is partly because U.S. military intervention in the region has gone hand-in-hand with the export of the discipline through State Department funded programs of American Studies. But interest in American Studies is also due to a genuine curiosity within the Middle East in what America is, how it formed as it did, and why it acts as it does. Understanding the ubiquity of globalized American culture and of globalized

American power has led many students across the Middle East to consider American Studies as an important and relevant discipline.

As I returned to UNM I was struck by the different ways that we view the discipline of American Studies within the U.S. as opposed to outside the U.S. Beyond the borders of the U.S. American Studies is something like an area studies, while within the U.S. the field is distinct from traditional area studies disciplines, and instead is organized to critically analyze multiple and contested meanings of America. UNM's American Studies Department is working solidly within the U.S. version of the discipline, but it is also increasingly interested in knowledge produced about America in non-U.S. and in transnational contexts.

In this newsletter you will see evidence of the vibrancy of our intellectual mission as students and faculty work to critically analyze articulations of political power in everyday life, while we also think about America as a geopolitical force in the world that gains meaning in transnational and global circulation.

Faculty News



Dr. Amy Brandzel

It's been a really busy and enriching year. We are all so happy and lucky to have Dr. Alex Lubin back as Chair, and with his leadership, we have many great changes in store. I had the pleasure of co-teaching the ACS Proseminar with Dr. Antonio Tiongson, and we had a terrific time working with this year's cohort of brilliant AMST graduate students. While we are making big shifts to our core courses in the AMST graduate program in the next year, I've very much enjoyed the opportunity to work with the incoming graduate students these last two years. I've also really enjoyed working with our fantastic undergraduates

in some new classes focused on Intersectional Activisms, Queer Activisms, and The Politics of Citizenship.

Research-wise I've been busy finalizing my manuscript, *Against Citizenship and The Violence of the Normative*, which will be forthcoming from the University of Illinois Press. I've also been able to work on new articles and conference presentations involving breast cancer activisms, the debates on intersectionality in Feminist Studies, the violence of academic critique and academic affect, and the politics of intersectional knowledge productions.

And I cannot wait to work with our two new faculty members, Dr. Cynthia Young and Dr. Zachary Morgan. Welcome to them both!

Dr. Jennifer Denetdale

It most certainly has been a busy, productive and inspiring year for me! I am pleased that I published four essays this year, including, "You Brought History Alive for Us': Reflections on Nineteenth Century Navajo Women's Lives," published in *Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and the West* (University of California Press, 2015) and "I'm not Running on my Gender': The 2010 Navajo Nation Presidential Race, Gender and the Politics of Tradition," published in *Formations of United States Colonialism* (Duke University Press, 2014). My essay "Naal Tsoos Sáni: The Navajo Treaty of 1868, Nation-Building, and Self-Determination" was published in *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indians* by the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and the Smithsonian



(2014) as part of the American Indian Treaty project and directed by Suzan Shown Harjo. As a consultant to the American Indian Treaty project, hosted by the NMAI, I was a participant in the American Treaty symposium in September 2014. It was wonderful to see the opening of the American Indian Treaty exhibit and meet other scholars who also were part of the project.

In April of 2014, I delivered the keynote address to the 2nd Navajo Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bi-Sexual, and Queer (LGBTQ) conference. I am deeply appreciative that the Native and Navajo LGBTQ community consider my support and alliance with them valuable. I continue to conduct research, teaching, and writing that support perspectives on Indigenous feminisms and gender studies.

On January 18, 2015, I delivered the inaugural address to the 23rd Navajo Nation Council upon their inauguration as the elected leaders of the Navajo Nation. It was a very exciting event for me and my family and relatives. As my family and I traveled to the inauguration, I received many calls of well-wishers. That address was one of the highlights of my career as an educator and scholar. This summer, I will travel to Melbourne, Australia, to deliver a keynote for the Australia New Zealand American Studies conference. I look forward to the trip and meeting new people.

I spent the summer of 2014 conducting research for my book project on Navajo women, gender and the making of the modern Navajo Nation. I also worked with our graduate students Nick Estes and Melanie Yazzie and my colleague David Correia on border town violence. Our research on the violence against Indigenous peoples in Gallup, New Mexico led to the commission of articles with *Indian Country Today* (ICT). We are very pleased for the support that ICT West Coast editor Valerie Taliman and Alex Lubin, our fearless chair, has given us for this on-going project. At present, I am working on an essay on Gallup and border town violence. The essay will be submitted for a special issue of *Wicazo Sa Review* on border town violence. The special issue is co-edited by Nick Estes and Melanie Yazzie.

I have submitted an essay, “Return to ‘The Uprising at Beautiful Mountain in 1913’: Marriage and Sexuality in the Making of the Modern Navajo Nation” for an anthology on Indigenous feminisms, editor Joanne Barker, and look forward to its publication. I also have a contract to write an essay on the Navajo Long Walk for a press. I continue to work on my book project on Navajo women, gender and the making of the Navajo Nation. In 2014, I was awarded a UNM Feminist Research Institute grant and was able to conduct research in photo archives at the Navajo Nation museum and the Museum of Northern Arizona, both of which have collections of Milton Snow’s photographs. My research on the photos of Milton Snow is intended for a book chapter, and I have begun drafting a chapter. I have also presented on the Snow photographs at several conferences.

As far as teaching goes, I intend to focus on offering courses on Indigenous feminisms and gender studies and to develop a course on tribal museums and archives. I am pleased to see Marcella Ernest, Nick Estes, Melanie Yazzie and Dina Barajas moving through their graduate studies and look forward to their graduations. I have also begun working with the UNM LGBTQ Resource Center, both to support our LGBTQ of color and to create courses on Native LGBTQ, gender and sexuality.



Dr. Gabriel Meléndez

As most of you know I was away from campus most of last year. In spring 2014 I was on sabbatical leave, and in the fall I held a Fulbright Teaching Fellowship at Eszterházy Karoly College (EKC) in Hungary. Each semester offered me the opportunity to do transnational research and global studies in two widely differing geographic settings. In January, I visited Manila, Corrigidor Island and Cebú, areas of the Philippines where the transpacific Columbian exchange is in evidence in both ritual and everyday practices. While there I also was able to appreciate how these three sites are linked to Borderlands culture and New Mexico history in particular.

Living and teaching in Hungary provided me with a deeper understanding of social and educational concerns in contemporary Central Europe. I was most especially made aware of how these societies are coping in the post-Soviet era. While at EKC I taught a modified version of the “Race, Culture and Cinema,” a seminar I routinely offer here. Beyond this I engaged my Hungarian colleagues and students in dialogue to increase critical awareness of the inclusion and exclusion of ethnic minorities in American film and of the demographic features of U.S. Latinos. In return students and colleagues were generous and instructive on a number of topics pointing me to useful studies on the Roma and other ethnic minorities in Central Europe.

Last year I presented the following conference papers:

“Cristo Negro and Esquipulas Venerations from Chimayó, to Manila,” for the Devotional Cultures Exhibit, I.D.E.A. InterDisciplinary at Colorado College in March;

“Red Sky at Morning, *The Milagro Beanfield War* and Bless Me, Ultima: Latino-themed Representations in Books and On-Screen,” Latino Film Festival and Conference: Transnational Lives, Latino Studies Program, Indiana University in April;

“Fade In and Fade Out on Race, Ethnicity and Pluralism in American Cinema,” at the Agria Media Conference held at EKC in October.

“El cine como medio de estudio social: Enfoque y apago en la imagen del latino en el cine norteamericano,” for the Film and Literature Without Borders Project (Foreign Language and Literature Department)

University of Palack’y, Olomouc, Czech Republic in November.

I published the book-chapter, “Growing Up: Book Culture in the Land of Scarcity and Want,” in *With a Book in Their Hand: Chicano/a Readers and Readership Across the Centuries*, edited by Manuel M. Martín Rodríguez from U.C. Merced.

Dr. Kathleen Holscher

Kathleen Holscher published an article, “This is how I remember the finest man I ever knew”: War Commemoration, the Politics of Healing, and the Miraculous in the Cause of Emil Kapaun,” in the Winter 2015 issue of *U.S. Catholic Historian*. She also finished work on a book chapter, “A Spirituality You Can Put a Handle On”: Vatican II, Memory and Ministry in Rural New Mexico,” which will be included in an edited volume, *The Lived History of Vatican II*, under contract with Cambridge University Press. In Spring 2015 Holscher taught her first American Studies graduate seminar, Secularism and U.S. Empire. In Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 she participated in the final two sessions of the four-part Young Scholars of American Religion seminar series, held in Indianapolis, IN between 2013-2015. She is currently beginning a new project on medical missions and Catholic interventions directed toward the reproductive bodies of women of color, including Hispana women in New Mexico.



Dr. Alyosha Goldstein

As the semester comes to a close, I had the pleasure of attending the opening day of Project Feed the Hood’s International District Community Garden, in which a number of the students in my class “Social Justice & Community Engagement” participated. I developed this new course in collaboration with Anzia Bennett at La Cosecha CSA, a project of the Agri-Cultura Network, and other community partners including Grow the Future, Los Jardines Institute, Erda Gardens, First Choice Community Health, Centro Sávilá, and the SouthWest Organizing Project. Focusing on hunger, food access, community health, and locally supported agriculture, this course provided students with a combination of hands-on community-based work and resources to critically analyze the inequitable structural conditions that social justice movements seek to challenge. It was a welcome teaching complement to my spring semester graduate seminar on “Colonialism and Decolonization,” for which I am deeply appreciative of the insightful and energetic engagement of the students.

Throughout the year I’ve been continuing to work on my second book manuscript, which uses the 2010 Claims Resolution Act as a way to analyze the entanglements of U.S. colonialism, racial capitalism, and economies of dispossession and conciliation in the historical present. I was awarded a fellowship as a 2015 New Mexico Office of the State Historian History Scholar to conduct research for the chapter on water rights settlements, and I’m thankful to my graduate assistant Jadira Gurule for her preliminary work on this. Substantial support from UNM’s Research Allocations Committee this year will allow me to make significant headway in completing research for the book. In the meanwhile, my edited volume *Formations of United States Colonialism* was published by Duke University Press in November. I began this project in 2010, and it’s gratifying to see it out in the world showcasing the contributions of so many brilliant scholars. I also published the essay “Possessive Investment: Indian Removals and the Affective Entitlements of Whiteness” in the special forum on “Whiteness Redux or Redefined?,” edited by Min Hyoung Song and Cynthia Young for the December issue of *American Quarterly*.

I had the opportunity to participate in a number of generative panels and symposia. I presented a paper on “The Jurisprudence of Domestic Dependence: Settler Colonial Possession and *Adoptive Parents v. Baby Girl*” for the “Reflections on Dispossession: Critical Feminisms” symposium, convened by Brenna Bhandar at SOAS, University of London in October. This will be a chapter in a forthcoming volume edited by Brenna Bhandar and Davina Bhandar. At the American Studies Association annual meeting in Los Angeles in November, I chaired two panels organized around *Formations of United States Colonialism*, with contributing authors Joanne Barker, Jennifer Denetdale, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, Dean Itsuji Saranillio, Fa’anofo Lisaclaire Uperesa, and Manu Vimalassery presenting on new work that builds on the essays included in the volume. As chair of the ASA’s Graduate Education Committee, I organized a roundtable on publishing featuring Rod Ferguson, Christina Heatherton, Sandy Soto, Neferti Tadiar, and UNM American Studies’ grad student extraordinaire Nick Estes. I also participated in the mock job interview panel organized by the ASA Student Committee. In April, I was an invited discussant for “Comparative Settler Colonialisms: A Workshop” at the Heyman Center for the Humanities at Columbia University. I’m grateful to the workshop organizers Nadia Abu El-Haj, Audra Simpson, and Paige West for the invitation to participate in the important forum.

As the spring semester winds down, I’ve been busy as the Director of Graduate Studies facilitating the transition for our impressive incoming graduate student cohort. At UNM I served on the Russell J. and Dorothy S. Bilinski Fellowship Selection Committee. I’ve been preparing for my fall courses, AMST 385 and “Land and Indigenous Politics in the Americas,” a new graduate seminar developed with support from UNM’s Latin American and Iberian Institute. I’m also looking forward to presenting as part of the panel on “Confronting Colonial Regimes of Legibility and Settlement,” with Joanne Barker, Kevin Bruyneel, K-Sue Park, and Johnny Mack that I organized for the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association annual meeting in June. I’m likewise gearing up to begin reviewing nominees this summer as the chair the American Studies Association’s 2015 Ralph Henry Gabriel Dissertation Prize Committee.

It’s been a great year thanks to my colleagues in the Department and elsewhere and our outstanding students. With a research cluster initiative on “Critical Indigenous Studies and Extractive Capitalism” in collaboration with Jennifer Denetdale, Laura Harjo, and Cristobal Valencia in development, along with the arrival of Cynthia Young and Zachary Morgan at UNM, the upcoming year promises many exciting new opportunities.

Dr. Rebecca Schreiber

In the fall I presented “The Undocumented Everyday: Migrant Rights and Performative Strategies in the work of Alex Rivera” at The American Studies Association’s Annual Conference, in Los Angeles, CA. At the ASA I was part of a panel on “Performance, Affect and Labor in Contemporary Documentary in the Americas” with Brian Herrera, Laura Gutiérrez and Ramon Rivera-Servera. I also developed an essay based on the conference paper for a special issue on U.S. Immigration published by the *Journal of American Studies* (Cambridge UP). In addition I wrote another essay on the work of filmmaker Alex Rivera for publication in the anthology *Remaking Reality* edited by Sara Blair, Joseph Entin, and Franny Nudelman, which is forthcoming from UNC Press.



This spring the Dean's Office in the College of Arts and Sciences announced that I will be able to take a research leave as part of a Career Advancement Semester in the fall of 2015 in order to complete revisions on my book manuscript *Migrant Lives and the Promise of Documentation*, which is forthcoming from University of Minnesota Press. I also reviewed an essay for a special issue of *Feminist Formations* titled "Mobilizing Vulnerability: New Directions in Transnational Feminist Studies & Human Rights," edited by Wendy S. Hesford and Rachel Lewis.

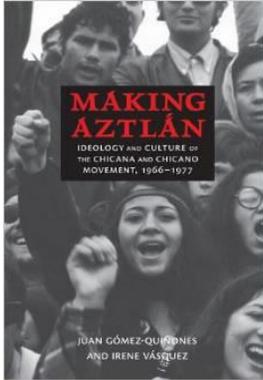
In terms of university service, I was appointed to the Faculty Advisory Committee for the Mellon-Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) program at UNM, which provides funding and support to college students who are interested in getting a Ph.D. and who are part of groups that are underrepresented on college and university faculties. This year five undergraduates were awarded fellowships as part of the MMUF program.

Dr. Irene Vasquez



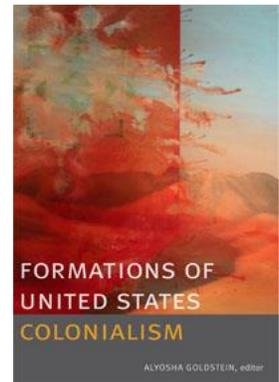
I look forward to starting the 2015-2016 academic year. For me personally, 2014-2015 marked some very important moments in my 20-year career as a college professor. UNM Press published my co-authored book titled *Making Aztlán: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966-1977* in April 2014. By the end of May 2014 two very important educational projects that I have spent over twenty years of my life supporting came to positive culminations. My commitment to Chicana and Chicano Studies started in the early 1990s and led to my involvement in calls to establish a Chicana and Chicano Studies department at UCLA. Fast forward twenty years later and, as a result of a heroic community effort in New Mexico, UNM established a Bachelors degree in Chicana and Chicano Studies and launched a Chicana and Chicano Studies Department. Another important community project that I am involved with is a community charter school in El Sereno, CA. After enduring a bomb threat, years of scrutiny by the Los Angeles Unified Public School district, and a possible school closure, Anahuacalmecac: International University Preparatory High School of North America, successfully defended its charter. As a member of the board of trustees for the school I look forward to working with Native American communities in New Mexico to strengthen education for our youth. In 2015, I also worked with two graduate student led research collectives and look forward to assisting them launch their online publications. I eagerly anticipate continuing these and other professional and community endeavors into the next year.

Select Faculty Publication



Irene Vasquez (with Juan Gómez Quiñones) published, *Making Aztlán: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966-1977*. UNM Press describes the book as follows, “This book provides a long-needed overview of the Chicana and Chicano movement's social history as it grew, flourished, and then slowly fragmented. The authors examine the movement's origins in the 1960s and 1970s, showing how it evolved from a variety of organizations and activities united in their quest for basic equities for Mexican Americans in U.S. society. Within this matrix of agendas, objectives, strategies, approaches, ideologies, and identities, numerous electrifying moments stitched together the struggle for civil and human rights. Gómez-Quíñones and Vásquez show how these convergences underscored tensions among diverse individuals and organizations at every level. Their narrative offers an assessment of U.S. society and the Mexican American community at a critical time, offering a unique understanding of its civic progress toward a more equitable social order.”

Alyosha Goldstein published the important collection *Formations of U.S. Colonialisms*, featuring chapters by American Studies faculty Alyosha Goldstein and Jennifer Denetdale and American Studies department PhD student, Berenika Byszewski.



Book Description from Duke University Press: “Bridging the multiple histories and present-day iterations of U.S. settler colonialism in North America and its overseas imperialism in the Caribbean and the Pacific, the essays in this groundbreaking volume underscore the United States as a fluctuating constellation of geopolitical entities marked by overlapping and variable practices of colonization. By rethinking the intertwined experiences of Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Chamorros, Filipinos, Hawaiians, Samoans, and others subjected to U.S. imperial rule, the contributors consider how the diversity of settler claims, territorial annexations, overseas occupations, and circuits of slavery and labor – along with their attendant forms of jurisprudence, racialization, and militarism – both facilitate and delimit the conditions of colonial dispossession. Drawing on the insights of critical indigenous and ethnic studies, postcolonial theory, critical geography, ethnography, and social history, this volume emphasizes the significance of U.S. colonialisms as a vital analytic framework for understanding how and why the United States is what it is today.”

Bravo Graduates!

The American Studies Department at UNM extends its most sincere congratulations and gratitude to this amazing group of eight graduating seniors receiving a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies. Best wishes for all your future endeavors.

Bachelor of Arts in AMST

Benjamin Ahern-Wild (Spring)

Joshuah Blea (Fall)

Robert Craig (Spring)

Bertha Gomez (Spring)

Devon Lang, *with honors* (Spring)

Alexis Laube-Manigault, *with honors* (Fall)

Alison Rodriguez (Spring)

Joel Wigelsworth (Spring)

The American Studies Senior Thesis Symposium

The American Studies Department's Senior and Honors Thesis Symposium took place on Monday, April 20th, 2015 from 2:00-5:00pm in the Sandia Room, SUB 3rd Floor. Presentations included the following:



Kayleen Aguino -- Reclaiming Native American Culture: Responses to Appropriation in Fashion

Benjamin Ahern Wild -- The Evolution of Female Representation in Rap Music

Cathy Chenevey -- Teen Mom Reality Shows: Glamorizing or Preventing Teen Pregnancy

Robert Craig -- The Disability Rights Movement from the “Ugly Laws” to the Americans with Disabilities Act

Heather Foster -- Earl Warren, Japanese-Americans and World War II

Orlando Jacquez -- #transstoriesmatter: Representations of Transgender Characters in the Media

Sam Kerwin -- The Fifth Estate: Informed through Satire

Devon Lang -- “Not Your Grandfather’s Diversity”: Colorblind Racism on Disney ‘Tween Television

Robin Willoughby Moses -- Native America and the Catholic Church: Evangelization, Education, and Assimilation

Mariah Robinson -- “Quit Being a G.A.N.G. Girl”: The Gender Roles of the Victory Outreach Church

Alison Rodriguez -- Transgressions at the Dining Table: Family and Gender Roles in Cult TV

Joel Wigelsworth -- Burning Cash to Smoke Out the Homeless: Examining Capitalism, Structural Oppression, and Exploring Viable Alternatives Regarding Anti-Homeless Legislation



Undergraduate Director Rebecca Schreiber would like to congratulate all of the American Studies majors who completed their B.A during the 2014-2015 academic year: Alexis Laube-Manigault and Joshuah Blea (fall 2014); Benjamin Ahern Wild, Robert Craig, Joel Wigelsworth, Devon Lang, Alison Rodriguez and Bertha Gomez (spring 2015). Congrats also go to Alexis Laube-Manigault and Devon Lang for both being awarded the American Studies Department’s Honors Thesis Prize.

Photo: Alexis Laube-Manigault

2014-2015 Graduate Student News

Trisha Martinez

As my first year in the Ph.D. program comes to an end I reflect upon the busy yet rewarding school year. I've had the opportunity to take challenging seminars and an independent study that have influenced my understandings on Women of Color feminism, transnationalism, and the US Southwest. My participation in two different graduate student research collectives centered on social movements and transnationalism has also proved to be very beneficial to my academic experience. The collectives provide a space for us to strengthen our critical and conceptual skills through shared readings, enhance our awareness to important political social issues and concerns, as well as the means to receive feedback about our own research. Equally important is each of our own contribution to the collectives which, for the Transnational Research Collective (TRC), will result in the publication of an occasional series paper for the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute (SHRI); and for the Social Movement Collective each of us will be contributing to a blog that will serve the community by cultivating consciousness about the transnational dynamics of *Ayotzinapa*.

My research on cultural performance has also continued to develop. I had the opportunity to present my research on Mexican Ballet *Folklórico* at the RGSA Conference in March. In May, I will be visiting the University of Michigan to share my work at the Disentangling Empire Conference. At this conference I will be presenting on the ways that *folklórico* has become intertwined with both the United States and Mexico's nationalist narratives of the 20th century. I argue that *folklórico's* local and regional expressions counter the notion of a unified Mexico and work against historical and contemporary notions of US empire.

This year has definitely kept me on my toes. Adapting to the new routine as a mother of three while staying on top of my studies is definitely a challenge but nonetheless rewarding. Although I am more than excited for the summer break that is approaching, I am looking forward to the next school year and what lays ahead.

Román Gurrola

Román Gurrola is interested in modernity-coloniality, issues of anti-Indianess, genocide and slavery, racialization, popular culture, social movements, *fronterizo* communities, Latin American radical politics, Indigenous movements in Mexico and Bolivia, militarization of spiritual practices along the border, undocumented international workers and cultures of resistance. Román is part of the recently established Transnational Collective, where collaboration with other students in History and Sociology helps develop discussion around individuals who are similarly committed to radical politics and issues of land and liberation.

Christina Juhász-Wood

Christina Juhász-Wood completed her second year as a fellow at the UNM Center for Southwest Research, where she processed Senator Jeff Bingaman's papers. She also taught two undergraduate courses for the AMST Department and presented a paper at the American Studies Association Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. She is in the process of completing her coursework and preparing to take her comprehensive examination in the fall.

Linda Eleshuk Roybal

Linda Roybal facilitated Talking Service: Standing Down, a Great Books discussion series for veterans under the auspices of the New Mexico Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The local program was sponsored by the Esther Bone Library of Rio Rancho, NM. Roybal is a doctoral candidate in American Studies and an Army veteran.

Froilan Orozco



Froilan Orozco completed his first year in the Masters program in American Studies at UNM. For being his first year, Froilan has been highly involved and actively engaged inside and outside the classroom. He forms part of two graduate student of color collectives: the Transnational Research Collective and the “*Cultivando* Consciousness/Cultivating Consciencia” social movements collectives. Furthermore, Froilan presented in the 1st Annual Raza Graduate Student Conference and in the Shared Knowledge conference at UNM.

Froilan is interested in critical film studies and identity formations. This first year has opened his interest in many diverse themes in which he looks to intersect with film studies. There are many opportunities for on campus events, lectures and organizing in which Froilan looks to bring his expertise in his second year of graduate school.

Donatella Davanzo



Donatella Davanzo, American Studies PhD student and photographer, currently has her photographs about *acequias* in the Maxwell Museum’s exhibit *El Agua es Vida: Acequias in Northern New Mexico*, which will close in May 2015. The photographic material is part of her research and future dissertation about the traditional irrigation system of New Mexico. Since 2013, she is the Route 66 Fellow for the Center for Southwest Research at the UNM Libraries. She is capturing every building along Route 66 within the city directory of Albuquerque (from East to West along Central Avenue and from North to South along the historic section of Route 66 pre-1937) for the photographic archive and for future scholars. An article about this visual project, *Route 66 Fellow captures moment in time for the ‘Mother Road’*, appeared on October 28, 2014 at the UNM Newsroom website. On April 23, she will present a summation of her fellowship project, titled *Framing Cultural Landscapes. Route 66 Crossing Albuquerque*, at the Zimmerman

Library, Water Room, at 2:00pm.

In October 2015, Donatella will present her visual collection about Route 66 to narrate its “sense of place” from an anthropological and phenomenological perspective to The Image Knowledge Community at its *Sixth International Conference on the Image* at the University of Berkeley (<http://ontheimage.com/the-conference>).

American Studies Graduate Student Association

The American Studies Graduate Student Association (ASGSA) has had a busy year, full of scholarly conversations and racial justice activism.

Thanks to the hard work of Fizz Perkal, Caroline Goodman, Rachel Levitt, Darcy Brazen, Marthia Fuller, and Caitlin Grann, ASGSA was able to offer several modest grants to help support students presenting at conferences and conducting research. In addition to financially supporting graduate students, ASGSA was involved in co-sponsoring several talks by visiting scholars including Steven Salaita as well as Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, both of which focused on nuancing our understandings of the complexity of settler colonialisms, including a comparative transnational approach to settler colonialism from Dr. Salaita, and a consideration of Oceanic militarized settler formations and their adversarial relationship to indigenous futurities from Dr. Goodyear-Ka'ōpua.



This year ASGSA continued to participate in several University-wide student coalitions aimed at challenging institutional complicities in colonial and multicultural violence. Specifically, we have been part of organizing to (1) ban Columbus Day on campus and replace it with an honoring of Indigenous resistance, and (2) make the investments UNM makes with our tuition dollars more transparent and ethical by divesting from corporations that profit off of colonial violence and human rights abuses on the U.S.-Mexico border and in occupied Palestine. This work is ongoing, and we look forward to continuing to oppose the use of our tuition dollars, which we are going into substantial debt to pay, being used to deport, imprison, and oppress our families, friends, and colleagues.

As the department's graduate student association, ASGSA hopes to continue working with and for American Studies graduate students to increase support for graduate students as well as increase transparency at all levels of the University. To get involved with ASGSA and network with other American Studies graduate students contact: Caitlin Grann at cgrann@unm.edu

Graduate Program News

The Department wishes to congratulate these graduate students on their hard work and graduations this year:

MASTER OF ARTS

Kimberly Griffis (Spring)

Jadira Gurule (Spring)
Graduating with distinction

“Obama as Visual Icon: Blackness, Post Raciality, and Multiculturalism in the Neoliberal Age”

Farah Nousheen (Spring)

“Critical Travelers: A Settler Colonial Technology and Site of Resistance at the Palestine/Israel International Border Crossings”

2015 - American Studies Police Violence and Social Control Lecture Series

By: Darcy Brazen

The Police Violence and Social Control Lecture Series resonates strongly with scholars, like myself, having methodological investments in Critical Indigenous Studies, Queer of Color critique, and Transnational Feminisms that argue for anti-statist modes of jurisprudence. The 8-week lecture series coincided with a packed class of AMST 310 students that included not only American Studies majors, but students from the disciplines of criminology, biology, Russian, and communication and journalism.

Initial readings for the class contextualized the lectures, and began with Achille Mbembe’s essay on necropolitics. Mbembe thickens Foucault’s analysis of biopower as the sovereign’s right to kill by revealing the distinction between who lives and who dies as a racialized distinction. Racism inhabits the fouled nests of biopower, or government, where the perceived stateless or liminal citizenry is constantly and systematically vulnerable to hyper-vigilant panoptic state technologies of surveillance; under constant threat of death, maiming and persecution via both state-sanctioned law enforcement and extra-legal brutalities by groups like the slave patrols and KKK; or sentenced to the conditions of “bare life”.

Transwomen like Renae Swope reveal the gendered contours of police violence. As Trans* Inclusion Specialist for the UNM LGBTQ Resource Center, Swope eloquently and forthrightly related her interactions with Albuquerque police on April 2. Non-gender conforming people frequently encounter police and must find a way to negotiate the terms of verbal aggressions and threats of coercive force. Transwomen, and especially transwomen of color, are presumed by police to be prostitutes, even when just hanging out in a park. Renae experienced the indignity of having the police call her by male pronouns. Everyday micro-aggressions are debilitating and an essential part of the gendered and

racialized structural forces of state violence enacted by police that lead to detainment, arrest, imprisonment or death. Renae spent two years in prison after finally reacting to the intrusive everyday police harassment. These are matters of life and death within an Albuquerque community mourning the death of 19 year-old Mary Hawkes by APD officer Jeremy Dear in April 2014 and the late 2014 shooting death by police of Jessica Lopez in Denver. Both teens, wanted for vehicle theft, had strong connections with local queer, lesbian, gay and transgender communities and will be sorely missed.

The first speakers in the series, Jennifer Denetdale, PhD and PhD candidates Melanie Yazzie and Nick Estes emphasized that liberal democracy hinges upon the violence and erasure of Native peoples. Yazzie signifies this as “settler colonial common sense” where Native people are hyper-policed to protect white access to commerce. Dr. Denetdale reported that Gallup and other towns often initiated pass laws for Navajos, resulting in large zones of spatial exclusion. With the rehab center offering no services, and large populations of homeless Navajo, nearly 180 Navajos have died due to exposure, often alcohol-related, in the Gallup region in the last three years, a continuation of policies of exclusion and extermination as shopkeepers grow rich selling “native pawn” and jewelry. Homeless people experience state-sanctioned bare life neglect in addition to a visibility of homeless urban Indians that portends to exposure to extralegal violence. Estes memorialized Allison Gorman and Keith Thompson, or Cowboy and Rabbit, who were killed by local Albuquerque teens for sport while sleeping in an empty lot in summer 2014.

Queer Studies Reading Group in American Studies

Born out of a course taught by Dr. Amy Brandzel in Spring 2010 by the same title, the “Postcolonial Queer Studies Reading Group” has continued to meet and discuss cutting-edge research. The group consists of graduate students and professors from American Studies, English, Communication and Journalism, Philosophy, Women Studies, and History. Since its inception, the group has read literature spanning Queer Native Studies, Queer Diaspora Studies, Queer Migration, Queer of Color Critique and Critical Ethnic Studies. This year, the group decided to focus on police violence and imprisonment. Together, students and faculty explored queer prison abolition scholarship, readings that drew transnational connections between specific forms of colonial state violence and settler colonialisms, and queer complicities as well as resistance to such violence. The group is dedicated to providing the time and space for a diverse collective of scholars to come together to engage with research that focuses on the intersections and mutually constituting logics of settler colonialism, heteronormativity, racism, nationalisms, globalization, and non-normative sexual and gender identities, collectivities, histories, politics, and representations. The group is open to anyone interested in learning more about postcolonial queer studies. If you are interested in participating in the group you can contact Amy Brandzel at brandzel@unm.edu for more information.

Transnational Research Collective



There has been an increasing renewed interest in research and scholarship related to transnationalism, internationalism, and globalization processes at colleges and universities across the nation. The interdisciplinary graduate-centered research collective assembled at the University of New Mexico (UNM) in fall 2014 seeks to publish 2015 Occasional Series Working Papers to enhance student and faculty success related to research and scholarship. The collective's purpose is to explore transnational social and civic expressions in the US borderlands in the early 20th century. Beginning in fall 2014,

graduate student and faculty participants convened to establish a culture of collective research support. The TRC's purpose is to explore 20th century transnational social and civic expressions in the US and in Mexico to better understand social and cultural formations across national borders. The group is made up of interdisciplinary graduate students and faculty scholars from the areas of American Studies, Chicana and Chicano Studies, History, Latin American Studies, and Sociology. The research collective accomplishes its purpose through investigating the transnational social dimensions of US and Mexican based activists, artists, and organizations. The research collective has identified primary and secondary materials available in digital format that allow for an analysis of complex transnational dimensions. The themes explored by the research collective include cultural expressions, education-based practices, labor declarations, feminist liberal expressions, immigrant and human rights advocacies, economic development, and civil rights proclamations. The focus on US-based Spanish language alternative media outlets allows the researchers to track US imperial formations as they relate to public discourses on race, class, gender and sexuality subordination and individual and community empowerment. The materials are printed in Spanish and require careful methodological treatment and analysis.

The research collective has five academic objectives:

- Through shared readings and discussions, student and faculty participants strengthen their critical and conceptual skills as they relate to the concepts of transnationalism and internationalism.
- Participants develop and discuss abstracts for conference presentations.
- Participants will produce an occasional series paper for the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute (SHRI) at UNM for distribution to university classes and make them publicly available on the SHRI website.
- Participants will complete a research paper that will form the basis of their master's thesis or dissertation manuscript in their respective graduate programs.

- Advanced students and faculty will further the publication of peer-reviewed articles or manuscripts that include co-authored materials.

Participants believe that the research collective's research and pedagogical approach intertwining faculty and student professional development will ensure degree completion among the participants and increase their educational and employment opportunities. Participants gain by engaging in a method that underscores interactive peer-review facilitation. The model for the research collective is based on central tenets of Chicana and Chicano Studies as an academic discipline and community building educational practice. In a period of growing austere conditions at institutions of higher education, collective research and publication efforts, such as that offered by the Transnational Research Collective at UNM, can serve as a model for sustaining rich and meaningful inquiry in higher education.

Social Movements Collective

The *Cultivando Consciousness, Cultivating Consciencia* graduate student collective grew out of consciousness from the genocide in Iguala, Guerrero of the forty-three missing students of the *escuela normalista* of Ayotzinapa. The goal of this graduate student collective is to provide our academic expertise and training in diverse cultural, gendered, and racial theoretical frameworks to create an online blog that produces articles that engage critically in transnational/global social movements and issues. As concerned graduate students of color, we feel a deliberate responsibility to bring awareness to critical issues affecting marginalized peoples around the world. We do not position ourselves as experts in topics and discussions; but rather as concerned students that seek to engage communities in discussion to think critically through social issues and offer diverse outlooks.

The collective is currently composed of seven graduate students of color working in cross-disciplined fields as a way to provide different approaches to social movements and social issues. The fields of American Studies, History, and Sociology are represented within these seven students. Our advisor, Dr. Irene Vasquez, serves as the department chair of Chicana and Chicano Studies as well as holding a joint position as an associate professor in American Studies. The collective aims to create a safe space where students can push each other to think beyond traditional frameworks and produce innovative ways to study social movements in a global context. The collective uses a transnational approach to study social movements through culture, race, gender, and sexuality methods that aim to understand translocal(s) impact(s).

The blog serves a multifunctional purpose in producing knowledge. First, it serves as a platform in which each student can contribute works that engage with distinct social movements and social issues in a way that takes an intersectional approach. Secondly, the collective takes a "decolonial archive" approach as a way of merging information, news outlet, media productions, and performance as a way to situate diverse information in conversation for the reader. The collective realizes that within transnational social movements, news becomes extremely difficult to decipher through the distinct forms of dissemination and therefore, we work as a group to collect information that engages topics critically as a way to produce a new archive on the subject matter discussed. Finally as a learning function, the collective decided to include a "wordbank" section in which viewers could click on terms identified as particularly important to the subjects as a way to construct knowledge between audience and composers. Therefore, each contributor works with these goals in mind to produce blog

posts that bring awareness to social movements and builds its own archive. The blog itself will be launched by the end of the spring 2015 semester.

The collective's goals go beyond the blog to organize events, lectures, demonstrations, and performances that engage our campus community and communities abroad in social movements consciousness. The first event organized by the collective was a lecture titled, "Students on the March: From the Mexican Revolution of 1910 to Ayotzinapa in 2015" given by Dr. Nelly Blacker-Hanson who conducted research in the state of Guerrero and Ayotzinapa as part of Cold War education in Mexico. The event took place April 30th, 2015, at UNM and brought together a considerable audience that included undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and community members. This event served as a platform to announce the collective's blog. The group collected an e-mail list to create a list serve that will serve as a core audience for the blog. This collective will continue to build its audience through a combination of events, demonstrations and performances as a way to engage readers critically in the textual, oral and organizing tradition. The commonality between the members of the collective is their scholar-activist approach towards academia and organizing.



By working as a collective in outside pressures of academia, the students are able to provide each other with peer review and feedback that provides a safe space to develop skillsets. The seven students range from first year MA students to advanced PhD students; therefore, beyond the establishment of the blog, the collective serves as a space for the students to collaborate towards presenting each other with resources, news, and opportunities. As such, the collective serves to deconstruct traditional forms of learning and producing intellectual discourse.

Alumni News

We would love to hear from our alumni. If you have news you'd like to share (a new book, new appointment, an adventure that studying with us may have helped prepare you for, etc.), please let us know. You can send your news in an email to amstudy@unm.edu, and we'll be sure to include it in our next newsletter.

From the Administrator

Sandy Rodrigue



As always, this has been a busy year at my desk. I actually finished my tenth year as the department's only staff member in January. These last several years have definitely been full of changes and challenges. I've worked with many different faculty members, both here in the department and across campus, and I've worked closely with almost 100 graduate students as they finished our program.

As many of our faculty have already mentioned, I am happy to welcome Dr. Alex Lubin back as our Department Chair. He brings a wealth of new experience from his time as the Director of the American Studies Center at the American University of Beirut. Upon his return, the department had to 'hit the ground running' to prepare for our Academic Program Review. It was a time of reflection on where the Department has been over the years since our last review and where we are moving in the future. The review was a success, and we were happily already in the beginning stages of implementing some of the suggestions made by our external reviewers. I am excited to see where Dr. Lubin's vision takes us over the next several years.

A successful search for a new faculty member always takes a good deal of time to coordinate, and I share the department's enthusiasm over the addition of Professors Cynthia Young and Zachary Morgan next year. The growth in our faculty ranks can only mean great things for our students as they have additional faculty to work with on their projects.

Looking forward, I am excited to welcome our incoming cohort of eight graduate students. Some of them are familiar to the department as they were already taking classes and working with our faculty. Others are coming to us from out of state, and we are eager to have them here as well. I continue to be excited by the diversity that is found among the American Studies students and faculty. It is their energy and creativity that encourages me every day in my job, even when it's tough.

This year's newsletter highlights many accomplishments of our faculty and students. This has all been achieved during a period of continued belt-tightening by many at the University, including us. While difficult at times, I understand that one of my roles is to help the department wisely use the funds that we have been entrusted with, both those from the state and those from our generous donors. I continue to look for ways to efficiently use the limited funds we have to meet the department's goals. I am happy to say that we've been able to accomplish a lot over the last few years, even with a relatively small budget.

On behalf of the American Studies students and faculty, I say thank you to our alumni for your continued support of the department. Please feel free to email us at amstudy@unm.edu to keep us posted on your accomplishments. I'd love to be able to pass them on to the faculty, current students, and other alumni!