The 2016-2017 year was a very exciting one for PLAS. From the magnificent symposium on the African Diaspora in Brazil in November to the groundbreaking conference on Gabriel García Márquez in March to the stimulating conference on "Order and Disorder in Latin America" in April, it was a busy and rewarding year. PLAS students and faculty were treated to lectures by leading scholars of Cuba, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela and beyond. The number of Latin American Studies majors and minors has continued to climb. The graduate program, thanks to the ceaseless efforts of the liaisons, has flourished. I invite you to visit the PLAS website in order to learn more about PLAS events, courses, and other exciting opportunities.

-Gabriel Paquette, Director of PLAS
On Saturday April 1st, the Program in Latin American Studies hosted this year’s annual graduate student conference titled Order & Disorder in Latin America. The conference drew graduate students and scholars from neighboring and international institutions for an interdisciplinary conference on the social, political, and artistic dynamics that permeate Latin America and constitute various disciplinary bodies of knowledge in an attempt to open fresh critical spaces for inquiry across several fields of study. Accordingly, presenters analyzed the intersecting and diverging systems, processes, narratives, and histories of order.
and disorder in Latin America. Specific presentation topics discussed ranged from troubling or disordering forces —violence, social and health inequalities, infectious diseases, corruption— to creative energies —social mobilizations, artistic ingenuity, migration flows, policy diffusion. Moreover, several presentations addressed the modes by which processes of order and disorder in Latin America intricately inform relations with its hegemonic neighbor, the United States, not only as a space for American action, but also as a source of potential ordering and disordering within the American context.
Fellowships

Tucked in the rolling mountains of southern Mexico, the state of Chiapas occupies a curious place in the country's history and its social landscape. Chiapanecos like to talk about how the state joined Mexico, twice. At the same time, well more than a century later, many Chiapanecos commented upon how even the second, democratic, union teemed with political deals including a referendum that excluded the state’s many indigenous communities and women. Coupled with the state’s distance from Mexico City and its position on the border of Guatemala, these facts serve to distance Chiapas from a sense of centralized Mexican national identity. With a travel grant from the Program of Latin American Studies, I traveled to Chiapas last summer to conduct dissertation research that focused on Rosario Castellanos, the region’s most famous writer. I based myself in the state’s former colonial capital, San Cristobal de las Casas, and made regular trips to Comitán, some 100 mountainous kilometers away. These two cities occupy central roles in Castellanos’ fictions: Comitán was not only the Castellanos’ urban family home but also provides the setting for the writer’s first novel, Balún Canán, while her subsequent book of short stories, La ciudad real, centers around San Cristobal. Traveling to Chiapas allowed me to begin understanding Castellanos’ writings in a distinct way. The writer's geography is directly linked to her experience of the state’s diverse social and geographic settings. Additionally, I was able to conduct research in the Centro Cultural Rosario Castellanos, located on the main square in Comitán, where I was also invited to present my research and to comment upon the critical study of Castellanos in the United States. I am quite grateful to PLAS for the funds that permitted me to make this invaluable trip!

-Lauren Judy Reynold, German & Romance Languages & Literatures

Krista Liguori, a graduating MSPH student, spent five months in the Peruvian Amazon studying antibiotic resistance in sewage. The goal of this research study is to track the development of antibiotic resistance in hospitals (and other centers where resistance may develop) and the dissemination of this resistance through sewage into the environment and surrounding communities. Based in Iquitos, Krista coordinated the start-up of this new sewage study by building relationships and partnering with local hospitals, authorities, NGOs, universities, and the sewage company. She was responsible for study coordination, sample collection, laboratory analysis of samples, and statistical analyses. Reflection: I first came to Iquitos in June of 2016 for my thesis research, and was not ready to leave after the six-month project ended. This PLAS-supported trip has allowed me to finish out a full year here in IQT. Over the past year, I learned Spanish and became fluent, a huge achievement for me as I have always hoped to learn a second language. I was able to practice many of the skills we learn in the master’s program while being exposed to many new challenges and skillsets that are unique to living in the Amazon jungle. I take confidence in my education and abilities knowing that I’m capable of running a study on my own, living abroad long-term, learning a new language, and developing so many relationships. I hope I will be able to use these new skills through a meaningful career in Epidemiology and/or Water and Sanitation work and will definitely be back to Peru!

-Krista Ligouri, School of Public Health
Thanks to the Program in Latin American Studies’ winter intercession grant, I was able to travel to Barcelona, Spain in January 2017 to consult holdings from the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón. This trip furnished an opportunity to conduct research on my dissertation project’s principal object of study, the intersection of imperial and soteriological discourses in campaigns of forced baptism in Iberia and Mexico during the XVI c. My dissertation project analyzes discursive modes of resistance to conversion in the Iberian Peninsula by Spanish Muslims and Aztecs or Mexica populations in New Spain who were subject to forced baptism. At the archive, I consulted two specific documents in the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón that are crucial to my overall inquiry: ecclesiastical records of baptism during from the XVIc. (ref: E5.08019.ACA/3.20.5.1), and a key accord “Capitulaciones del Almirante don Cristóbal Colón” (ref: 3569, folios 135v-136v) between the Catholic Monarchs and Columbus with regard to his voyage that explicitly references the Christian victory against Nasrid forces at Granada. The first document is fundamental in analyzing the semantic networks of discourses of baptism at work in the peninsula that were contemporaneous to the arrival of Franciscan Spanish Missionaries to México. The latter aids me in tracing the origins of the providential and apostolic paradigm that was in a certain sense inaugurated by Columbus and sustained throughout the various colonial enterprises in the Americas during the XVI c. and beyond.

-Ian Q. Rogers, German & Romance Languages & Literatures
This past summer, I had the opportunity to study the placement and display of the Precolumbian stone spheres of the ancient Diquís civilization for my honors thesis. With the PLAS travel grant, I was able to defray travel costs and study the spheres both in the United States and in Costa Rica. I spent the months of May and June examining stone spheres within U.S. collections. I conducted research at the American Museum of Natural History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, and the Costa Rican Embassy in Washington D.C. During this time, I studied primary sources and archives, interviewed museum professionals, and documented the locations and exhibitions of the spheres within the U.S. I then spent the months of July and August studying stone spheres in both urban and rural locations within Costa Rica. I worked closely with Dr. Francisco Corrales Ulloa, the director of the National Museum of Costa Rica, with whom I traveled to various UNESCO World Heritage Sites. My time in Costa Rica proved to be invaluable for my thesis; I was not only able to see first-hand the original chiefdom villages of the Diquís, but I was also able to study those rare stone spheres that remain in-situ. It was striking to compare these spheres to those that had been relocated to busy city centers. Through this experience, I have been able to gain a more profound understanding of the spheres and of placement and display practices as a whole.

Mary Seo, History of Art Major

Events

Guamán Poma
Exhibition of Drawings from the Nueva Corónica
October 6th, 2016
3:30 pm
Gilman Auditorium

Sherwin Bryant
African-American Studies and History, Northwestern University
Governing the Body, Sex, Kinship, and Christian Conjugality
Thursday, November 10
4-6:30 PM
Mergenthaler 236

The Program in Latin American Studies and The Department of German & Romance Languages Present

Academic Programming
Department of German and Romance Languages
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland
J. Luis Rodriguez is a PhD student in the Political Science Department and Graduate Liaison for the Program in Latin American Studies at The Johns Hopkins University. Using historical institutionalism, his research examines how rising and middle powers, especially democratic and developing countries, influence global governance, with emphasis on nuclear, global humanitarian, and environmental governance.

Gabriel Paquette is Professor of History at The Johns Hopkins University, where also serves as Director of the Program in Latin American Studies (PLAS). His research explores European, Latin American, and Global History, with a focus on the Portuguese and Spanish empires.

Ian Q. Rogers is Graduate Liaison for the Program in Latin American Studies and Gilman Fellow in the Department of German & Romance Languages & Literatures at The Johns Hopkins University. His research interests include (Post) Colonial Theory, Aztec Philosophy, and Counter-Reformation Theology, Crypto-Islam in Spain, Art History of XVI c. Iberia, and Literatures of “Early Modernity”.

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