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	North Central Council of Latin Americanists	

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As a scholar of Latin American slavery, I have had the opportunity to participate in several of the many international conferences that have been held this year to commemorate the bicentennial of the 1807 British abolition of the slave trade. For scholars in this field, Latin America's sustained and important participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade has long been acknowledged and historians of Latin America are increasingly represented in an area of study that until recently has been dominated by historians of the Anglo-Atlantic world. No study of the sad story of world slavery, of course, could be complete without a serious consideration of the weight of slave imports into the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking Americas. In the three and a half centuries of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Brazil absorbed almost 40% of this commerce while Spanish colonies' share was another 16% (with Cuba dominating). Of the estimated 11 – 12 million Africans brought in this period to American shores as slaves, only 5% arrived in the territories that would become the United States.

Given these figures, I am always a bit surprised to find that after presentations to non-academic audiences (students and the general public) on the topic of slave emancipation in Latin America, the most common questions center on their interest about the existence of slavery outside of the United States. The role of slavery in shaping U.S. politics and race relations are themes that are familiar to most well-informed Americans. That slavery might have had a similar impact on other American societies is a question that few have entertained. Perhaps on the East Coast where the Caribbean diaspora has greater presence, there is more recognition of the Afro-Latin American experience. In the Midwest, however, my impression is that the image of Latin America is of a civilization firmly rooted in an Indian past, an idea seemingly confirmed by recognizable images of Chichén Itzá and Machu Picchu. Fans of Latin American music, dance and soccer likely have other impressions. I fear that most educated Midwesterners, however, would be hard pressed to explain the origins and significance of the African presence in Latin America. Of course, for scholars of the region, understanding these points is crucial to interpreting much about Latin America's history, culture and politics.

I found a very different divide on the question of African slavery at a conference I attended this summer in Ghana. Bringing together scholars from around the Atlantic to present papers explaining the background and impact of the 1807 abolition acts, much of the work of British and U.S. academics focused on the politics in the North Atlantic which increasingly

turned public sentiment against a commerce that had long been tremendously profitable. Examining issues such as the importance of religious opposition and new ideas about human rights, many works analyzed the cultural world that made anti-slavery propaganda so effective.

Most African scholars in attendance were visibly unhappy with this approach. The focus on the humanitarian sentiments that propelled Abolition, their questions made clear, side-stepped the more pressing matter of the trans-Atlantic slave trade's impact on African societies and the link between abolition and Europe's formal colonization of the continent in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In short, they argued for a history that helped to explain the present impoverishment of Africa.

Whatever the merits of their position, I leave this to scholars of Africa to decide, the impact of African slavery on the four continents which participated in this sad trafficking is undeniable. Certainly we could do more to make the legacy of slavery a prominent part of how we present Latin America to our students. If for no other reason than to place into relief the difference between U.S. race relations and the distinct qualitative and historical dimensions of how race questions have played out in Latin America, the issue once again points to important shared characteristics of these New World societies but also how in many areas their paths diverged.

Seth Meisel  
Associate Professor of History  
UW-Whitewater

#### 2007-08 NCCLA Executive Committee

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## CONFERENCES & CALL FOR PAPERS

**SYMPOSIUM The Latin American Studies Program at Grand Valley State University** plans its upcoming program on the theme, *Persistent Divides: Marginalization and Social Exclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Allendale, MI, March 14-15, 2008. Please direct inquiries to: Joel Stillerman, Director, Latin American Studies Program, Grand Valley State University, Phone: 616-331-3129, Email: [stillejo@gvsu.edu](mailto:stillejo@gvsu.edu).

**CONFERENCE 55th Annual Conference of the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies**, Wednesday, April 9 - Saturday, April 12, 2008, Flagstaff, AZ. The

RMCLAS Annual Conference provides an opportunity for scholars and graduate students to share original research on Latin America. For more information see RMCLAS 2008 web page at <http://www.cal.nau.edu/LAS/rmclas.asp>.

**CALL FOR PAPERS New Latin American Development Strategies in a Changing International Economic and Political Context**, May 21-23, 2008, Aalborg University, Denmark

After a shift to neoliberal development strategies in the first Post Cold War period, Latin American development strategies are now substantially more heterogeneous. Relevant contextual factors behind this tendency are changing international economic and political dynamics similar to the economic rise of China and India, as well as the development crises in a number of Latin American countries after a decade of neoliberal reforms. As a consequence, development strategies have come to vary widely in Latin America, both in terms of economic policy and foreign policy choices. Some countries have opted for strong nationalist policies such as the nationalization of energy resources and strong state intervention in the economy, while others maintain more market-driven approaches. However, an emphasis on socially oriented policies appears to be on the rise, bridging this divide.

**Proposal deadline:**

Submissions will be reviewed and accepted on a rolling basis, beginning January 7th. Final deadline for abstract submission is **March 15, 2008**.

**Contact information:**

For further information, please contact organizers:

Steen Fryba Christensen: [sfc@hum.aau.dk](mailto:sfc@hum.aau.dk)

Vibeke Andersson: [van@ihis.aau.dk](mailto:van@ihis.aau.dk)

Conference website: <http://www.ccis.aau.dk/Events/2158474>

FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS
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**Summer 2008 Library Travel Research Grants** will again be offered by The Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida. These awards are funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Their purpose is to enable faculty researchers from other U.S. colleges and universities to use the extensive resources of the Latin American Collection in the University of Florida Libraries, thereby enhancing its value as a national resource.

As many as 12 awards of up to \$750 each will be made to cover travel and living expenses. Awardees are expected to remain in Gainesville for at least one week and, following their stay, submit a brief (2-3 pp.) report on how their work at UF Libraries enriched their research project and offer suggestions for possible improvements of the Latin American Collection. Researchers' work at the Latin American Collection may be undertaken at any time during the summer, starting May 15th, but must be completed by August 14, 2008. At least one grant will be made to a scholar from a Florida college or university.

Information on the UF Latin American Collection is available on the Internet at: <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/lac>. You can also e-mail [Richard Phillips](mailto:Richard.Phillips@ufl.edu), Director of the Latin American Collection, for further information.

**Application Deadline:**

To apply for a Library Travel Grant, send a letter of intent, brief library research proposal, travel budget and a curriculum vitae to Patricia Sampaio, 358 Grinter Hall, PO Box 115530, Gainesville, FL 32611-5530. Tel: 352-392-0375 ext 806. Fax: 352-392-7682. Email: [psampaio@latam.ufl.edu](mailto:psampaio@latam.ufl.edu)

The deadline for all application materials is **March 03, 2008**.

**Richard E. Greenleaf Visiting Scholar Award**, Summer 2008. The Latin American and Iberian Institute (LAI) and the Division of Iberian and Latin American Resources (DILARES) of the University of New Mexico are pleased to invite applications from U.S. and international scholars for a short-term library visiting researcher program to promote scholarly use of its Latin American collections. This program is designed to provide scholars, junior faculty, and graduate students in the U.S. who specialize in Latin America the opportunity to work with one of the largest and most complete Latin American collections in the country.

Through the Richard E. Greenleaf Visiting Scholar Fund, LAI provides three separate awards: one \$10,000 award and two \$2,000 awards. All three awards are intended to help defray travel and housing costs for Albuquerque, New Mexico, however, the \$10,000 award is reserved for scholars staying over an extended period of time (e.g. 2-4 months). Recipients of the \$10,000 award will be expected to provide a report for the funding committee and a short article for the LAI Newsletter.

Applications are due by: **Monday, March 24, 2008**.

For more information, please contact the LAI at 505-277-2691, or e-mail Vickie Nelson [vnelson@unm.edu](mailto:vnelson@unm.edu) or Lauren Koller [kollerla@law.unm.edu](mailto:kollerla@law.unm.edu).

**Harvard University's DRCLAS (David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies) Library Scholars Program** offers short-term fellowships available for faculty members from universities in the United States to use the resources of the Latin American Library collections at Harvard. The grants are intended for scholars from two- and four-year U.S. educational institutions who do not have access to extensive Latin American library resources. The program is supported with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Title VI grant.

Awards of up to \$2,000 are available to help cover the travel and living expenses of visiting researchers. Awardees are expected to carry out their research at Harvard for at least two weeks. Researchers' work may be initiated at any time during the summer, starting June 1, but must be completed by August 14, 2008.

**Application requirements:**

The project proposal (2-3 pages) should include a brief description of the intended research, and should explain the specific Latin American resources in the Harvard University library collection to be consulted. The proposal should also indicate how use of the collections at Harvard will

enhance either the applicant's own research or curriculum development at his or her home institution.

**Application deadline:**

To apply for a summer Library Scholars grant, please send an application, letter of application, and brief project proposal to the Outreach/Publications Manager (contact details below) by **April 1, 2008**.

For application form and more information please refer to DRCLAS website:

<http://www.drclas.harvard.edu/scholars/library>

Contact information:

Maria Regan  
Outreach and Publications Manager  
David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies  
Harvard University  
1730 Cambridge St.  
Cambridge, MA 02138

email: [regan@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:regan@fas.harvard.edu)

tel: (617) 496-0202

fax: (617) 496-2802

**Yale University Library Visiting Fellowship Program** offered by Yale University Library is pleased to invite applications for one short-term library visiting fellowship to promote scholarly use of its collections of Latin Americana. The fellowship includes a stipend of \$10,000 plus modest funds towards the cost of travel and supplies, which are meant to help defray expenses in traveling to and residing in New Haven, Connecticut during the tenure of the fellowship, which will be for three months. This fellowship is tenable from May to October 2007.

The program is designed to provide junior scholars based in the United States and specializing in Latin America with the opportunity to work with one of the oldest and largest Latin American collections in the country. The Yale Library contains a wealth of research material, including monographs, serials, pamphlets, newspapers, government documents, manuscripts, maps, photographs and documentary film. A flexible program will be developed to balance the individual goals and interests of the visiting fellow with the needs of the Yale Library. Approximately 20% of the time spent at Yale will be devoted to a library project.

**Proposal Requirements:**

Candidates for this fellowship must have a Ph.D. and be U.S. citizens. Applicants (junior faculty, independent researchers) are asked to submit a research proposal not exceeding three pages in length and a resume to the Council on Latin American and Iberian Studies at the address given below. Applicants must also arrange for two confidential letters of recommendation (in English) to be sent to the same address.

The proposal should address specifically the relevance of the Yale University Library collections to the proposed research. Prospective fellows are invited to consult the Library's home page at <http://www.library.yale.edu/> and its online catalog <http://orbis.library.yale.edu/> for information

about Yale's collections. Applicants should have specific Yale resources in mind - not simply a desire to make use of a major research library - as they prepare their proposals.

**Proposal deadline:**

The deadline for applications is **April 4, 2008**. A committee consisting of members of the faculty, the library staff, and the Council on Latin American and Iberian Studies will award the fellowship on the basis of the relevance of the proposal to unique holdings of the library, the merits and significance of the project, and the applicant's scholarly qualifications. The Award will be announced by about May 1, 2008.

Application materials and letters of recommendation are to be mailed to Library Visiting Fellowship Program, Council on Latin American and Iberian Studies, Yale University, 34 Hillhouse Avenue, Suite 342. P.O. Box 208206, New Haven, CT 06520-8206.

Electronic communications to the Committee may be sent to [jean.silk@yale.edu](mailto:jean.silk@yale.edu). Materials submitted by e-mail must be received no later than April 4, 2008.

TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES
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**The University of Florida (UF) Center for Latin American Studies** has developed a new semester-length study abroad program for undergraduate students at the Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) in San José. The program will be directed by Dr. Mark Thurner, UF Associate Professor of History.

All program participants will enroll in intensive Intermediate or Advanced Spanish (taught by UCR faculty) and in Latin American History and Culture (taught by Dr. Thurner). Program participants will also enroll in 1 or 2 elective courses taught in English through UCR's Academic Program for International Students. Students will earn a total of 12-15 credits. Lodging and meals will be provided by host families.

It is anticipated that 15 students will participate in the inaugural program in Fall 2008. Undergraduate students from any major with one year of Spanish language study (or the equivalent) and a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 are welcome to apply.

The program fee for 12 credits is \$7206 and includes tuition, lodging, most meals, international health insurance and emergency medical assistance. It does not include round-trip airfare, lunches during the week, personal travel, field trips for select UCR courses and personal expenses.

The application deadline is **March 15, 2008**. Non-UF students are encouraged to apply. Further program details, including information on how to apply online, can be found on the UF Study Abroad website: <http://www.abroad.ufic.ufl.edu/>.

For further information, contact Angela Grindal, Study Abroad Adviser, [adikeman@ufic.ufl.edu](mailto:adikeman@ufic.ufl.edu) or Mark Thurner, Program Director, at [mthurner@history.ufl.edu](mailto:mthurner@history.ufl.edu)

## NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Send News From Members for Spring 2008 issue to Elia J. Armacanqui-Tipacti  
[Elia.Armacanqui-Tipacti@uwsp.edu](mailto:Elia.Armacanqui-Tipacti@uwsp.edu)

## BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

“Mido Editores” announces the December 15th release of the second issue of PRL “Primera Revista Latinoamericana de Libros”. This issue will feature 11 in-depth articles from distinguished professors, journalists and writers.

The December-January issue will include: Roberto González Echevarría on the Real Academia Española’s edition of “One Hundred Years of Solitude,” Jorge Volpi on "La Puta de Babilonia," Sergio Ramírez on Hugo Chávez, Vania Markarian on the autobiographies of Regis Debray and María Eugenia Vázquez Perdomo with Juan Pablo Meneses on travel writing in Latin America.

About the magazine:

PRL is a Spanish language bimonthly periodical that features compelling book reviews from the most esteemed writers in Latin American. Each issue examines books that are being published in Spanish and English, which reviews the latest tendencies in Literature, Philosophy, History, Politics and Film.

For more information regarding PRL you may visit: <https://www.revistaprl.com/>.

César Chávez and the Common Sense of Nonviolence by Jose-Antonio Orosco.

Cesar Chavez has long been heralded for his personal practice of nonviolent resistance in struggles against social, racial, and labor injustices. However, the works of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. have long overshadowed Chavez's contributions to the theory of nonviolence. José-Antonio Orosco seeks to elevate Chavez as an original thinker, providing an analysis of what Chavez called "the common sense of nonviolence." By engaging Chavez in dialogue with a variety of political theorists and philosophers, Orosco demonstrates how Chavez developed distinct ideas about nonviolent theory that are timely for dealing with today's social and political issues, including racism, sexism, immigration, globalization, and political violence.

ISBN: 978-0-8263-4375-8 \$24.95, hardcover

University of New Mexico Press, Order Department, 1312 Basehart Rd. SE

Albuquerque, NM 87106-4363, TEL: 1-800-249-7737, Website:

<http://unmpress.com/unmpress.php>

The Ancient Spirituality of the Modern Maya by Thomas Hart. Since the arrival of the Europeans, the indigenous people of what is now Guatemala have endured massacres, persecution, and discrimination. Their religious beliefs and practices have been condemned as

superstition and witchcraft. Yet, the spiritual worldview of the Maya has survived, and even flourishes, five centuries after the invaders' first attempts to destroy it.

In *The Ancient Spirituality of the Modern Maya*, Thomas Hart weaves together the stories and experiences of those who practice Mayan spirituality today, based on the relationship between God, the World, and the Ancestors. Hart provides a sense of the Mayan worldview as it is revealed through myth, ceremony, and teaching. The information presented adds a modern perspective to this largely oral traditional culture and provides a unique insight into its practice today, with its many variations and adaptability that has sustained it for over five hundred years.

ISBN: 978-0-8263-4350-5, \$39.95 hardcover

University of New Mexico Press, Order Department, 1312 Basehart Rd. SE

Albuquerque, NM 87106-4363, TEL: 1-800-249-7737, Website:

<http://unmpress.com/unmpress.php>

Sacred Spaces and Religious Traditions of Oriente Cuba by Jualynne E. Dodson. Spaces set apart by religious practitioners to represent their understanding of the sacredness of their world provide useful windows into a religion's collective history, the expression of its ideas, and its followers. Jualynne Dodson explores sacred spaces constructed between 1998 and 2007 by contemporary practitioners of four popular religions in Cuba's eastern Oriente region. Three of these religions, *Palo Mayombé*, *Vodú*, and *Muertera Bembé de Sao* are Africa-based traditions; however, the fourth, *Espiritismo*, is indigenous to Cuba and Oriente, though it evolved from traditions of the U.S. and Europe. Eventhough the religions vary in historical development, in material artifact, and ritual activities that comprise their content, images in this book reflect inherited and shared cosmic orientation of the traditions.

The investigation of Dodson and the African Atlantic Research team offers an interconnected examination of the history and embedded understandings of these four religions while offering a panoramic view of religious development in Cuba and practitioners' struggle for a self-defined, Africa-based nature for their religious activities on the island.

ISBN: 978-0-8263-4353-6, \$39.95 hardcover **Web Special: \$11.36**

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