



## The Third Biennial Latina/Latino Studies Graduate Student Conference



The third biennial Latina/Latino Studies Graduate Student Conference was held February 23-25, 2007 organized by the Graduate Student Committee (Aidé Acosta, Laura Autesta, Abel Correa, Judith Estrada, Alyssa Garcia, María del Mar González-González, Genevieve Tenoso, and Mirelsie Velázquez). The

conference was held at the Levis Faculty Center, with an attendance of approximately 200 participants, not only from the University of Illinois, but from institutions across the nation, including the University of Texas; University of Minnesota; University of California; California State University; University of Indiana; Notre Dame; and George Washington University. A range of interdisciplinary topics were covered, including: community health and community practices; transnational sexualities; power and the intersections of race, gender, and class; redefining justice through social movements; reclaiming space and politicizing popular cultures; Latina/o participatory action in Illinois; developing a new Chicana/Chicano epistemology; and strategies for graduate student resistance in higher education.

The purpose of the conference was “to explore the historical and cultural processes that affect Latinas/os in the United States and to contribute to the understanding of Latina/o communities in the United States by promoting interdisciplinary analyses of shared social, political and cultural histories, and educational realities of Latinas/os.” The focus of the conference on activism and resistance through scholarship was proposed by the organizing committee as a way to commemorate and conclude the 10th Anniversary of the Latina/o Studies Program. During Spring 2006, the Latina/o Studies Program held an opening reception in celebration of the program’s 10th anniversary to reflect on the struggles that brought the program to its inception

as well as the multiple accomplishments that the program has achieved in the past decade.



María del Mar González-González, Mirelsie Velázquez, Dr. Richard T. Rodríguez, Johanna Galarte, Aidé Acosta, Dr. Isabel Molina, Dr. Alicia P. Rodríguez, Dr. Lisa Cacho, Dr. Juanita Díaz-Cotto

The keynote address was presented by Dr. Juanita Díaz-Cotto, Associate Professor of Sociology, Women’s Studies, and Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the State University of New York at Binghamton. Dr. Díaz-Cotto obtained her PhD in Political Science from Columbia University. Her interests include social movements, feminism and sexuality, and the impact of the criminal justice system on women and men of color. Her edited publication under the pseudonym of Juanita Ramos, *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians*, continues to be a foundational text on Latinas and sexuality. Dr. Diaz-Cotto introduced the conference by bridging the gap between theory and practice and the intersections of gender and sexuality. Additionally, she shared with us her experiences as a Boricua activist and as an Afro-Latina lesbian. She encouraged participants to continue to produce and participate in events that address our necessities as Latinas/os in the United States.

During the Saturday luncheon, Michael Reyes was the invited “inspirational speaker.” Michael is an activist poet, and graduate student from Chicago. Michael focused on issues of racism, (continued on page 8)

Page 1  
**Third Biennial Latina/  
Latino Studies  
Graduate Student  
Conference**

Page 2  
**New Faculty**

Page 3  
**2006-2007 Calendar**

Page 4-5  
**Harry Gamboa, Jr.**

Page 6  
**Accomplishments**

**Latina/Latino Studies  
Program Minors**

Page 7  
**Individual Plan of  
Study Majors in Latina/  
Latino Studies**

**Faculty Profile: Dr.  
Richard T. Rodriguez**

Page 8  
**Graduate Student  
Conference, continued**

Insert  
**Giving Opportunities**

## New Faculty



**Dr. Jonathan Xavier Inda** is Associate Professor of Latina/Latino Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Inda earned his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley in 1997. His research areas include the anthropology of globalization, migrant and diasporic cultures, governmentality and biopolitics, and the critical study of science, medicine, and the body. Among his publications are *Targeting Immigrants: Government, Technology, and Ethics* (Blackwell, 2006) and the edited volumes *Race, Identity, and Citizenship* (Blackwell, 1999), *Anthropologies of Modernity: Foucault, Governmentality, and Life Politics* (Blackwell, 2005), and *The Anthropology of Globalization, 2nd Edition* (Blackwell, 2008). In Fall 2007, Dr. Inda will teach the course, “Body, Culture, and Power” (LLS 296). This seminar will explore the construction, imaging, and experience of the body in light of modern regimes of power/knowledge.



**Dr. Gilberto Rosas** is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Latina/Latino Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. During the 2006-2007 academic year he was a postdoctoral fellow in Latina/Latino Studies. He earned a Ph.D. in

Anthropology from the University of Texas, Austin in 2004. Dr. Rosas theoretical expertise includes globalization, the state, violence, subjection, migrant illegality, race, as well as Chicana/o-Latina/o studies. During his tenure as a postdoctoral fellow, he worked on his manuscript entitled *Undermining the Mexico-U.S. Border: The Forging of Barrio Libre (The Free ‘hood), ‘Contaminated’ Agency, and Other Treacherous Geographies*. Additionally, Dr. Rosas published the following essays: “The Managed Violences of the Borderlands: Treacherous Geographies, Policeability, and the Politics of Race.” *Latino Studies* 4, no. 4 (2006): 401-18; “The Thickening Borderlands: Diffused Exceptionality and “Immigrant” Social Struggles during the “War on Terror.” *Cultural Dynamics* 18, no. 3 (2006): 335-49; “Los Tres Entierros De Melquiades Estrada.” *Contratiempo*, Julio (July), 27; “The Fragile Ends of War: Forging the US-Mexico Border and Borderlands Consciousness.” *Social Text* 25 No 2 (2007). During Fall 2006, Dr. Rosas taught the course “Global Borderlands” (LLS 496/ ANTH 499), which explored how the mobility of people across transnational boundaries have generated a new political thinking, or new political subjects principally between the United States and Mexico. Dr. Rosas received an unsolicited offer for a postdoctoral fellowship from the NYU Department of Social and Cultural Analysis. He has accepted an offer as assistant professor for the Department Anthropology and the Latina/Latino Studies Program at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

**Dr. Edna A. Viruell-Fuentes** is Assistant Professor of Latina/Latino Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, with a joint appointment at the School of Medicine. She received her Ph.D. in 2005 from the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan and most recently held a joint Yerby-Kellogg Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Harvard School of Public Health. Dr. Viruell-Fuentes’s work is informed by her extensive experience in policy research; an interdisciplinary scholar, her research



focuses on the intersections of race/ethnicity, immigration, class and gender, and their impact on health inequities. Using a transnational approach, she investigates the health impacts of migration for immigrant-sending and -receiving communities. Professor Viruell-Fuentes is the co-author of several publications on community-based participatory research. In addition, she published “My heart is always there”: The Transnational Practices of First-generation Mexican Immigrant and Second-generation Mexican American Women,” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 13(July-September 2006), 335-362. Her article, “Beyond acculturation: Immigration, Discrimination, and Health Research among Mexicans in the United States” will soon appear in *Social Science and Medicine*. In the Fall of 2007, she will teach “Latin American and Latino Migrations” and “Immigration and Health.”

## Postdoctoral Fellows 2006-2008



**Dr. Elaine Peña** was a postdoctoral research associate during the 2006-2007 academic year. She received her Ph.D. in Performance Studies with Northwestern University in 2006. During her tenure as a postdoctoral research associate in the Latina/Latino Studies Program, Dr. Peña accepted a joint postdoctoral research position in the Race, Ethnicity, and

Migration Program and Religious Studies Program with Yale University and a tenure-track position in American Studies with George Washington University. While in residence at Yale, she will continue work on the book manuscript *Making Space Sacred*. This ethnography examines the devotional performances, coded politics, and political economy of three shrines erected in honor of la Virgen de Guadalupe, — the sacred space known as Tepeyac in México, D.F. (est. 1531); its replica, the “*Second Tepeyac of North America*” in Des Plaines, IL (est. 2001); and a sidewalk shrine constructed by working-class Mexican nationals in response to an apparition of la Virgencita in Chicago, IL (2001). In addition, Dr. Peña is currently developing the critical performance text *Brown Nipple: a spectacular look at power, patriotism, and commerce on the U.S.-Mexico border*. Using the protagonists and histories/mythologies presented during the annual Washington’s Birthday Celebration (est. 1898) in Laredo, Texas USA, *Brown Nipple* considers American ethos, democratic processes, cultural production, skin privilege, excess/wealth, violence, and political economy on the U.S.-Mexico border. Dr. Peña has recently been offered a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Diversity Fellowship (2007-2008) to continue work on *Brown Nipple* with New York University.

**Dr. Michelle Téllez** is a post-doctoral research associate for the 2007-2008 academic year. She is an Assistant Professor in the Women’s Studies Program at Arizona State University’s West Campus where she teaches transnational feminist courses such as “Gender and International Development” and “Women, Cultures and Societies”. She specializes in women of color feminist theory, globalization studies, Chicana/o

## 2006 -2007 Calendar

### Thursday, August 31, 2006

7:00pm, 180 Bevier Hall  
*Documentary film screening: “The Other Side”*  
“The Other Side” documents Bill Brown’s two-year journey along the US-Mexico border and focuses on the work of migrant activists who have established water stations in the deserts of the Southwest in response to the growing number of immigrants who die there every summer.

### Thursday, September 7, 2006

4:00-6:00pm, Latina/Latino Studies  
*Latina/Latino Studies Program Open House*

### Thursday, September 14, 2006

5:00-8:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*“Programming 101”*  
Workshop for students seeking funding through SORF, PCC, CPFC and other funds

### Thursday, October 5, 2006

12:00-1:30pm, 242 Bevier Hall  
*Colloquium*  
Dr. Elaine Peña, Latina/Latino Studies postdoctoral research associate, “Contextualizing the Ineffable: Conflict, Devotional Capital, and the Production of Sacred Space in a Multi-ethnic Chicago Neighborhood”

### Wednesday, October 11, 2006

1:00-2:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Sujei Vega, graduate student, Department of Anthropology, “Mapping Memories: Transnationalism, Memory, and Space in Mexican Chicago”

### Wednesday, October 11, 2006

7:00-9:40pm, Temple Buell Hall Auditorium  
*“Latino Immigration: Local and National Challenges”*  
Immigration forum with guest panelists, community representatives, faculty and students

### Thursday, October 12, 2006

4:00-6:00pm, Latina/Latino Studies Program,  
*Latino Graduate Student Reception*

### Wednesday, October 25, 2006

12:00-1:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Joe Feria, graduate student, Department of Educational Policy Studies, “Post-Brown Segregation and the Struggle of Youth against Government Sanctioned Violence”



Studies, social movements and border studies. Dr. Téllez received her doctorate from Claremont Graduate University in the School of Educational Studies with a focus on Critical Community Studies in Spring 2005. In 2004-2005 she was a dissertation fellow in the department of Chicana/o Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her publications include the article “Doing Research at the Borderlands: Notes from a Chicana Feminist Ethnographer,” published in *Chicana/Latina Studies: the Journal*

### Thursday, October 30, 2006

12:00-1:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Maria Inez Zamudio and Cyndi Loza, undergraduates, Department of Journalism, “Fuente de la Diversidad Hispana: The annual National Association of Hispanic Journalism”

### Tuesday, November 7, 2006

12:00-1:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Jillian Baez, graduate student, Institute of Communications Research, “Mexican American Women Talk Back: Audience Responses to Representations of Latinidad in U.S. Advertising”

### Thursday, November 13, 2006

12:00-1:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Steven Rosado, student, Department of American Indian Studies, “Eliding Racism from the Colonizer onto the Colonized: Chief Illiniwek as a case study in Imperialist Nostalgia, a Tradition of Dishonor”

### Thursday, November 30, 2006

12:00-1:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Irupe del Rio Gabiola, graduate student, Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, “Post/National Families on the Stage: Reterritorializations of Puertorriqueñidad in the Diaspora”

### Friday, December 8, 2006

12:00-1:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Aidé Acosta and Alyssa Garcia, graduate students, Department of Anthropology, “Latinas’ Playing the Field: ‘Ethics, Fieldwork, and Power Dimensions in Applying Anthropology”

### Thursday, February 1, 2007

12:00-1:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Rufina Cortez and Judith Estrada, graduate students, Department of Educational Policy Studies, “Rethinking Educational Practices: Dialogical Exchange Between Critical Educators-Activists and Zapatista Communities”

### Thursday, February 22, 2007

7:00-8:30pm, 161 Noyes Lab  
Dr. Juanita Diaz-Cotto, State University of New York at Binghamton, “Lesbian Activism and Latin American Feminisms”

### Friday, February 23-Sunday, February 25, 2007

Levis Faculty Center  
*Latina/Latino Studies Graduate Student Conference*

### Wednesday, March 7, 2007

12:00-1:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Margaret Brown Vega, graduate student, Department of Anthropology, “Archaeological Investigation, Gender and Fieldwork, and the Politics of Research in Peru: Experiences from a Professional Conference and Beyond”

### Tuesday, April 3, 2007

3:00-4:30pm, 192 Lincoln Hall  
*Colloquium*  
Dr. Gilberto Rosas, Latina/Latino Studies Post-doctoral Research Associate, “The Thickening U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: ‘Immigrant’ Social Struggles during the ‘War on Terror’”

### Thursday, April 12, 2007

4:00-6:00pm, 180 Bevier Hall  
*The Rolando Hinojosa-Smith Lecture Series*  
Harry Gamboa Jr., Artist, “Contemporary Images/Text/ Concepts/Works/Words”

### Monday, April 16, 2007

3:30-5:00pm, 112 Gregory Hall  
*Open Discussion on Latino Political Empowerment*  
Congressman Luis Guterrez, “In the Forefront of Politics”, Sponsored by Omega Phi Beta Sorority and co-sponsored by Latino/a Studies Program, Center on Democracy in a Multiracial Society, La Casa Cultural Latina, and Political Science Department

### Friday, April 20, 2007

7:00-9:30pm, Levis Faculty Center  
*LLS minors and majors congratulatory reception*

### Tuesday April 24, 2007

12:00-1:00pm, La Casa Cultural Latina  
*Brownbag Series*  
Cristina Rodríguez and Charles Menchaca, undergraduates, Department of Journalism, “Latinos in Journalism”

of Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social in Spring 2005 and; the book chapter, “Generating Hope, Creating Change, Searching for Community: Stories of Resistance at the U.S./Mexico Border” in *Re-inventing Critical Pedagogy: Widening the Circle of Anti-Oppression Education* edited by Cesar Rossatto, Ricky Lee Allen, Marc Pruyun published by Rowman and Littlefield in the Fall of 2006. As a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Latina/o Studies Program she will be working on her book manuscript, *Transnational Community: Maclovio Rojas and the Politics of Gender in the Struggle for Autonomy*. In the Spring semester 2008 she will be teaching a border studies course for the program.

## The Rolando Hinojosa-Smith Lecture Series: Harry Gamboa Jr.

by Aidé Acosta



Harry Gamboa Jr. was the invited guest speaker for the Rolando Hinojosa-Smith Lecture Series.

His presentation entitled “Neonance: Contemporary Images/Text/Concepts/Works/Words” examined the complex interaction of the urban Chicano artist and network culture. Gamboa revealed how the utilization of various media (photography, video, performance, internet) can affect awareness regarding real-life/real-time and fictional/artificial events. He situated several of his works and the responses to these works within an overview of his career in a series of storied vignettes.

Harry Gamboa Jr. is a Los Angeles-based essayist, photographer, poet, director, and

performance artist. Along with Gronk, Patsi Valdez, Willie Herrón, he was a founding member of influential Chicano performance art collective ASCO. The group is notoriously known for creations such as the “No Movie” (staged photos disseminated as film stills so as to “project the real by rejecting the reel”) and “Spraypaint LACMA” (the first piece of Chicano conceptual art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in which ASCO members signed their name on the museum’s entrance walls after a curator said Chicanos don’t make art hence its absence in its galleries). Gamboa’s solo work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including in major shows in New York, Paris, and Mexico City. Having taught at virtually every four-year institution and art school in the greater Los Angeles area, a permanent collection of his media works and papers was recently established and archived at Stanford University’s Green Library. Gamboa’s book,

*Urban Exile: Collected Writings of Harry Gamboa Jr.*, was edited by media studies scholar Chon Noriega and published by the University of Minnesota Press in 1998. Gamboa grew up in the often fetishized and misrepresented area of East Los Angeles, California that continues to be impacted by poverty and violence. Despite what could best be understood as his miseducation courtesy of the East L.A. public schools, Gamboa learned through alternative means. In many ways an autodidact, books, newspapers, and 1950s television generated the cultural currency that would boost his vocabulary and heighten his awareness of the world outside of East LA. As a teenager he was active in community organizing and politics. A student at Garfield High School, Gamboa was a key participant in the 1968 “East L.A. Blowouts” which were the subject of the recent film *Walkout*.

The following is a discussion between Harry Gamboa Jr. and Aidé Acosta, Ph.D. student in Anthropology at UIUC:

**AA:** How is Chicana/o art situated within the United States and in the international scene? How is it received overseas?

**HG:** Up until quite recently, Chicano Art has simply been ignored and rendered invisible by the national and international art establishment. Several artists have been identified as suitable for the art market, however, most have been painters/sculptors. The view is changing with the scholarly examination of the late 20th Century. At this point, there is no market for Chicano art, i.e., whatever purchase prices that might be adopted are not enough to interest any gallery or auction houses and will not attract high profile buyers because Chicano art is completely undervalued. Several Chicano/a artists who seem to attract moderate prices have been

associated with mainstream television and film industry activities.

My images/videos have been included in several group exhibitions in France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Finland, and Mexico. Whenever Chicano/as are exhibited in these international exhibitions they are usually tossed in with a much larger group of non-Chicano/a artists. In this way, the Chicano/a presence remains underrepresented.

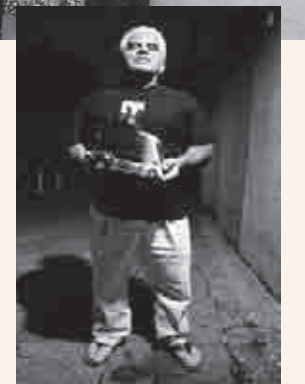
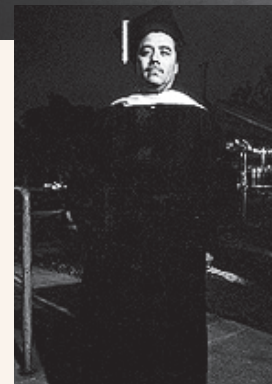
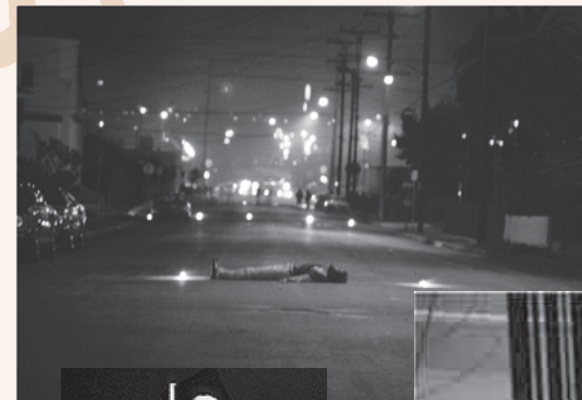
**AA:** What is the relevance of the no-movie in the 21st century for Chicanas/os in the media?

**HG:** Most Chicanas/os in the media are concerned with breaking into mainstream industry standards and therefore seek a path that leads to the maximum potential paycheck. This path does not usually lead to artistic expression nor to enhanced creativity or excellence. I feel that the “No

Movie” has more potential in affecting the general public who now has access to personal digital technology as a means of reaching a global audience.

**AA:** What are your expectations for the future of Chicana/o art?

**HG:** My expectations regarding Chicana/o art have undergone ever-changing expectations since 1972 to the present. I feel that the current crop of formally educated artists are attuned to the financial dynamics involved in art making and are highly driven to slide directly into the art market. Because there is no market for Chicana/o art this will then affect the imagery, intent, and quality of the art at which point it may be difficult to present the material under the auspices of Chicana/o Art. There are many Chicana/os involved in community-level art production but most often, this work will remain within restricted geographic/perceptual borders.



## Individual Plan of Study Majors In Latina/Latino Studies

### Accomplishments Within the Program

**William E. Berry** (Institute of Communications Research) served as a Fulbright scholar from May 14-30 in the Dominican Republic at both the Santo Domingo and Santiago campuses of Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra. During the assignment, Prof. Berry presented lectures in undergraduate and graduate classes. In addition, he conducted a third wave of curricula review with faculty in the Comunicación Social department (journalism), the Publicidad (Advertising) concentration, and the Mercadeotecnia (Marketing) department. In November 2006, and January of this year he had met with the faculty concerning curriculum during the first and second stages of his three-wave serial Fulbright award. At the conclusion of the curriculum review Prof. Berry debriefed with officials of the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo and was then invited to return to the Dominican Republic as a State Department-sponsored speaker later this year to make a presentation to journalists concerning how the Freedom of Information Act has improved the transparency of information flow in the United States since it went into effect 40 years ago. The State Department staff asked Prof. Berry to develop a resource tool kit that can be made available to Dominican journalists demonstrating how media professionals can mine public documents to improve the quality of news gathering and reporting.

**Adrian Burgos** (Department of History) had his book officially released May 14, 2007 entitled *Playing America's Game: Baseball, Latinos, and the Color Line* by the University of California Press. Additionally, Dr. Burgos

was officially informed by the Chancellor and Provost that he has received tenure and promoted to Associate Professor.

**Julie Dowling** (Latina/Latino Studies Program) will have her article, “Black and Hispanic: The Racial Identification of Afro-Cuban Immigrants in the Southwest” (with Alison Newby) in the fall 2007 issue of *Sociological Perspectives*.

**Alejandro Lugo** (Department of Anthropology and Latina/Latino Studies Program) was promoted to Associate Head/Director of Graduate Studies of the Department of Anthropology.

**Isabel Molina Guzmán** (Latina/Latino Studies Program and Institute of Communications Research) was promoted to Research Associate Professor with indefinite tenure.

**Richard T. Rodríguez** (Latina/Latino Studies Program and Department of English) was a visiting scholar in the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center during fall 2006 where he worked toward the completion of his book manuscript and began a series of new articles. He has recently published work in *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, *American Quarterly*, and *Theatre Journal*. Along with presenting papers at the American Studies Association and the Modern Language Association, he was invited to deliver papers at the conference “The Queer Archive” at UCLA and to the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory at UIUC. Dr. Rodríguez received the 2007 “Latina/o Congratulatory Ceremony Faculty Award”; the 2006 “Faculty Leadership Award” from

the LGBT Resources, Office of the Dean of Students; and was invited as the keynote speaker for the Latino/a Formal.

**Angharad Valdivia** (Institute of Communications Research) finished editing the book: *Latina/o Communication Studies Today*. New York: Peter Lang. (ed.) In this book both Professor Isabel Molina and doctoral candidate Jillian Baez have chapters. All chapters are written by leading scholars in the field of Latina/o Media Studies. The book should be out in time for Spring 2008. Already over a dozen scholars have indicated they will use this book for their classes. Dr. Valdivia published the following essays: “Long Live Jim Carey!” (2007). *Popular Communication*. 5:1; “Popular Culture and Recognition: Narratives of Youth and Latinidad” (2007) in N. Dolby and F. Rizvi [Eds.], *Youth Moves: Identities in Global Perspective*. New York: Routledge; “Is Penélope to J-Lo as Culture is to Nature? Eurocentric approaches to “Latin” beauties” (2007) in M. Mendible (Ed.) *Bananas to Buttocks: The Latina Body in Popular Culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press; “Mixed race on Disney Channel: From *Johnnie Tsunami* to the *Cheetah Girls*” (2007) in M. Beltrán and C. Fojas [Eds.] *Mixed Race in Hollywood Film and Television*. New York: NYU Press; and with Sarah Projansky, “Feminism and the Media” (2006). In Dow, B. J. and J.T. Wood [Eds.], *SAGE Handbook of Gender and Communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

### Latina/Latino Studies Program Minors 2006-2007



**Angelica Alfaro**  
Psychology major

**Yadira Bueno**  
History major

**Alberto Cabrales**  
Community Health major

**Cristina I. Diaz**  
Advertising major

**Nora A. Garcia**  
Political Science major

**William G. Garcia**  
Political Science major

**Melissa Gonzalez**  
International Studies major

**Ivone Gutierrez**  
Psychology major

**Christina J. Merced**  
Media Studies major

**Alberto J. Miranda**  
Spanish major

**Yadira Montoya**  
Health Administration major

**Jesse Palencia**  
Marketing major

**Daisy Partida,**  
Political Science major

**Aranzazu T. Rodriguez**  
Broadcast Journalism major

**Francine Galicia Romero**  
News-Editorial Journalism major

**Alvaro Saldaña**  
Psychology major

**Maritza Torres**  
Spanish major

**Courtney L. Watkins**  
Media Studies major



**Juan L. Lopez**

LAS, Political Science major and IPS major in Latina/Latino Studies, faculty advisor: Dr. Richard T. Rodríguez

I was raised in the Chicago land area and although there is a high concentration of Latinos, especially Mexicanos, there is a lack of knowledge about our own culture. I wanted to learn more about my own background and about others like me. I thought that taking some classes in Latina/Latino Studies would be beneficial. However I found these classes to be much more than that. They were an eye opening experience into the histories of different cultures with rich traditions, and unique lifestyles. The learning that I acquired taking just a few courses, convinced me to take further action to do an independent study with a concentration in Latina/Latino Studies. The process of making an independent plan of study was eased by the support I found in the Latina/Latino Studies faculty and staff. This concentration has made my college experience more satisfying and I only hope that others see it that way and that the Latina/Latino Studies program continues to grow.



**Steven Rosado**

IPS major in Ethnic Studies with an emphasis in Latina/Latino Studies, faculty advisor: Dr. Lisa Cacho

### Faculty Profile: Dr. Richard T. Rodríguez

Dr. Richard T. Rodríguez was awarded the “Latina/o Congratulatory Committee Faculty Award” during the 2007 Latina/o Congratulatory Ceremony for his diligent dedication to mentoring Latina/o students across disciplines. The profound impact he has had on a cohort of students was exemplified in the speech prepared by the student committee: “...He truly goes above and beyond the role of faculty member by advising our research and studies and taking an interest in our lives. Literally, he is always there for us.”

Dr. Rodríguez connects his experiences growing up in the largely Latina/o working-class city of Santa Ana, California with Latina/o students. He effectively encourages students to utilize what they learn in class to their daily lives, and empowers student to integrate their cultural capital in the classroom. Additionally, he utilizes his extensive networks to invite people that

are profoundly interested in the academic success of students. His attributions as a professor, scholar and mentor are best represented by student voices:

“He truly exemplifies what a student/professor relationship should be. He would always be available for every student when they needed anything.”  
(Jesse Palencia)

“He has cared and been concerned with my well being and career. I have not encountered another professor that cares about his students like Professor Rodriguez does.”  
(Sonia Rodriguez)

“Professor Rodriguez quickly gained a reputation as an available mentor, proficient teacher, and active member of the community. This has only been possible because of his genuine passion for the education of our communities. He is a model professor and through example, provides the motivation sought out by many of his students.”  
(Will Garcia)



**Patricia Santoyo-Marin** began her undergraduate career at the University of Illinois in the fall semester of 2000. Before the semester's end, cultural differences between campus and her Chicago, working-class and immigrant environment, facilitated a withdrawal. Upon returning to campus during fall semester of 2002, Patricia

co-founded U.N.F.A.S., the Latina Student Unions at the residence halls. After enrolling in her first Latina/o Studies course during Spring 2004 entitled “The Chicano Experience,” she found her first academic acknowledgment of Latino history. Patricia found the opportunity to make a career out of her passion by declaring an Independent Plan of Study in Latina/o Studies. Constant financial difficulties and health problems hindered Patricia's academic achievement. However, Patricia found genuine and caring support from all of her Latina/o Studies Professors and other University Staff who never failed to render culture-sensitive consejos.

Patricia Santoyo-Marin is currently a project coordinator at the University of Notre Dame-Institute for Latino Studies, Center for Metropolitan Chicago Initiatives and member of the Parent Participation Committee of the Cicero Youth Taskforce. Recently, Patricia participated in the research task force with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs publication, *A Shared Future: The Economic Engagement of Greater Chicago and its Mexican Community*.



Jaime Olmos, Angel Romo, Chris Garibay, Dr. Richard T. Rodríguez, Will Garcia, Osvaldo Valdes, Gabriel Corral

Dr. Rodríguez initiated his tenure as Assistant Professor of Latina/Latino Studies and English at the University of Illinois during Fall 2005. He earned his Ph.D. in the History of Consciousness from the University of California, Santa Cruz. He has taught courses on Latina/o literature, film and cultural studies. In Fall 2007 he will be teaching the courses: “Latinas/os on the Bronze Screen” (LLS 296) and “The Poetics of Healing: William Carlos Williams and Rafael Campo” (LLS 496).

graduate conference (cont.)

freedom and activism. He exalted the audience with his activist poetry and made a poetic composition using words selected by the audience including freedom, queer, participation and peasants. During Friday and Saturday evening, conference participants continued to engage in a social setting. During the Friday night reception, the local group “Sandunga” performed traditional Cuban popular music. On Saturday night, the Chicago-based group “Fandanguero” performed *Son Jarocho* music. DJ NELAztlan closed the night with a mix of salsa, reggaeton and bachata as well as freestyle and norteñas.

The success of the conference is best expressed with the comments of participants:

*This (the conference) is an excellent way of introducing graduate students with diverse backgrounds and specialties with other students, in order to create a collective mentorship body... It was helpful to meet other graduate students, both in Illinois and throughout the U.S. that rooted their scholarship in academic resistance. It was a great way of knowing that we are not*

*alone in the work that we do and a reminder as to why this work is important.*

The conference was acknowledged by the University of Illinois’ administration. The organizing committee received an official letter from Chancellor Herman dated March 2, 2007. In this letter, Chancellor Herman commended the committee for their success in organizing this conference, and acknowledged the importance of an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary engagement. He stated, “...this was my third time participating in the conference and once again I was very impressed with the breadth and depth of scholarly papers you assembled.” He continued to mention that Provost Katehi and Associate Chancellor Berry reported that they were “...most pleased with the caliber of the papers in terms of both the rigor of the scholarship and the innovative approaches used to theoretically examine these topics.”

The participation of faculty, staff, and students within Latina/o Studies and associated programs has helped our academic community to build a visible and vibrant

presence. It is important to note that the personal investments we all make in our daily works on campus help to promote the goals of our communities and generate an appreciation for the contribution of Latina/o Studies generally. On behalf of this year’s conference committee, we appreciate the honor of working for the Latina/o Studies Program and look forward to an equally dynamic conference in 2009.

**Director:** Arlene Torres  
**Associate Director:** Alicia P. Rodriguez  
**Visiting Assistant to the Director:** Rosalind Fielder  
**Staff Secretary:** Victoria Gonzalez  
**Editor:** Aidé Acosta

**Latina/Latino Studies Program**

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
510 E. Chalmers  
Champaign, IL 61820

**Phone:** (217)265-0370

**Fax:** (217)244-4526

**web:** [www.lls.uiuc.edu](http://www.lls.uiuc.edu)



Latina/Latino Studies Program  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
510 E Chalmers  
Champaign, IL 61820

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