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IN MEMORIAM:  
PROF. EDNA  
VIRUELL-  
FUENTES

by Jonathan Xavier Inda

Our dear friend and colleague Prof. Edna Viruell-Fuentes passed away on Sunday, August 23, 2020 in Urbana, IL. We in the Department of Latina/Latino Studies are very much in grief. Edna was an all-around wonderful person, a great colleague, and a brilliant scholar.

Edna was born in Mexico City, Mexico on December 28, 1964. She was one of 4 children. She is survived by her husband, Sunil Nepali; three brothers (Edgar, Eloy, and Ernesto Viruell) and their families; and her mother, Maria Amparo Viruell.

Edna received a BA in Mathematics and Psychology from Berea College in 1989. She then went on to receive a Master's in Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1991. Edna worked in the field of health care policy for a number of years before returning to school to work on a PhD in Health Behavior and Health Education at the University of Michigan. She received her PhD in 2005. After graduation, Edna was a Yerby Fellow and W.K. Kellogg Scholar in Health Disparities for two years at the Harvard School of Public Health. In the fall of 2007, she joined the University of Illinois and the Department of Latina/Latino Studies. She started out as an assistant professor and was subsequently promoted to associate professor with tenure.

Edna was a stellar researcher who had developed a national and international reputation as a leading scholar of race, health, and Latina/o immigration. This reputation was due to a superb body of theoretical, quantitative, and ethnographic work she produced that challenged how scholars thought about immigration and racial inequalities in health. Specifically, she eloquently argued that researchers needed to move away from individual level explanations of health disparities and focus instead on the structural factors that shape immigrant health. Indeed, she called attention to how, in order to fully understand immigrant health patterns, one had to analyze how othering, racialization processes, discrimination, residential segregation, and immigration policies affected health.

Most recently, Edna had been working on a project that focused on the relation between health and transnationalism. This project made a case for the importance of looking not only at the health experience of migrants at the point of destination but also at how the context in the sending community affects the health of both migrants and the families left behind. Specifically, she was working on an ethnographic study of the ways in which return migration (whether voluntary or due to deportation) to a migrant-sending community in central Mexico impacted the health and well-being of returned migrants, their families, and communities. This research is not only highly innovative but timely given the growing number of deportations to Mexico (and other countries in Latin America) over the last decade.

Edna was also an exemplary teacher and mentor. She taught courses ranging from large survey classes, such as Intro to Latina/o Studies, to specialized undergraduate and graduate seminars in her fields of research, such as Immigration, Health, and Society. Because of her deep commitment to teaching, she earned a regular spot on the campus' List of Instructors Ranked as Excellent. Edna spent a significant amount of time advising and supervising students outside of the classroom, including McNair Scholars, James Scholars, LLS senior thesis writers, and undergraduate and graduate students in other units. Her pedagogical commitment and expertise in immigration and health were integral to our department's curricular successes and strong instructional reputation.

Our deepest condolences go out to Edna's husband Sunil and her family. Her absence will leave a deep void in our department. We already miss her greatly.

## LLS STAFF INDEX

CHAIR Dr. Jonathan X. Inda

ACADEMIC ADVISOR & ADMINISTRATIVE  
COORDINATOR Dr. Alicia P. RodriguezOFFICE SUPPORT SPECIALIST M. Laura  
CastañedaSTUDENT OUTREACH & MEDIA  
COORDINATOR Erica Gonzalez

GRAPHIC DESIGNER Iris Medina

# NEW FACULTY



**Nicholas “Nic” Flores** received his PhD and MA in Comparative Studies from the Ohio State University. He also holds a BA in Anthropology and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from DePauw University. Dr. Flores was most recently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Latina/o Studies at Kenyon College. He was also an Associated Faculty member in the Department of Comparative Studies at The Ohio State University. Flores’s dissertation research ethnographically explores the advent of the biosocial HIV prevention strategy, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). In particular, he examines the social and cultural effects of PrEP among black and brown communities in central Ohio. He conducted two years of fieldwork with a local community-based health care clinic and pharmacy whose work focuses on HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention and LGBT holistic care. Recently, Flores and several of his colleagues at OSU won a grant that enabled them to create the transformative Access Project (TAP). The goal of TAP is to re-imagine “access” as a collective process that centers race, ethnicity, disability, class, gender, and sexuality. Instead of imagining access as a goal to achieve, we imagine it as a constantly unfolding collaborative endeavor.

Dr. Flores has published in *Latino Studies* and *The Journal of Visual Inquiry: Learning and Teaching Art*, as well as been featured in several local news and academic outlets about his work. Flores taught for six years at The Ohio State University main campus in Columbus, where his courses ranged from the introduction to the humanities to second-year composition courses that focused on American Identity in the World, Literature and Ethnicity, and U.S. Latino Identity. Flores received the Margaret Lynd Graduate Associate Teaching Award for excellence in teaching from his home department in 2015 and was awarded the Patrick S. Osmer SROP Fellowship by the Graduate School to complete his dissertation. He is currently working on a book manuscript based on his dissertation research. Flores enjoys cinema, video chatting with his family and close friends, and tasting odd items on restaurant menus.

Prof. Flores is teaching LLS 230 Latina/o Genders & Sexualities and LLS 387 Race, Gender and the Body in Fall 2020.



**José A. de la Garza Valenzuela** received his PhD in English with a certificate in Women’s Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He also holds an MA in English and a BBA in International Business and Economics from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. Dr. de la Garza Valenzuela was most recently Assistant Professor of Latinx Literature in the Department of English at Florida Atlantic University where he was also affiliate in the Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies and the Peace, Justice, and Human Rights Initiative. Prior to FAU, Dr. de la Garza Valenzuela was a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Latina/Latino Studies at UIUC. His research interrogates the legal and literary histories of citizenship, migration, and queer Latinx communities in the U.S. He has taught graduate and undergraduate courses on Latinx Literature, Citizenship and Narration, Comparative Migrations, and Queer of Color Writers in the U.S., among others. In 2015, his research on Arturo Islas received the Frederick A. Cervantes Premio from the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies. More recently his work has appeared in *Latino Studies* and been supported in part by Duke University’s SITPA fellowship program.

Dr. de la Garza Valenzuela’s current book project analyzes works by gay Chicano writers of the late 20th and early 21st centuries alongside legal texts that present a criminal and deadly narrative of queer and migrant communities, both of whom were and often continue to be uniquely subject to exclusion from entry to the U.S. In foregrounding novels that depict explicit encounters between these communities and the institutions or agents to whom enforcing immigration policy is relegated, he identifies and analyzes the ways the immigration apparatus and the laws that shape its contours depend on these erasures to perpetuate fictions reflected in archival data on citizens and migrants. Gay Chicanx fiction speaks to the unrecordable aggressions of the state, insisting on a suspicion of state archives, ones often invested in the erasure of queer migrant experience. Dr. de la Garza Valenzuela proposes that literary and cultural critics are uniquely poised to interpret these very legal texts, statutes, and court decisions in valuable ways that challenge the violations of human life and dignity they are designed to perpetrate and conceal. Consequently, the project makes an argument for treating legal texts as narratives, fictions even, that by design misconstrue queer and/or migrant communities, sometimes one and the same, as antithetical to a narrative of the nation upheld by the management of the citizenry.

Prof. de La Garza is teaching LLS 242 Intro to Latina/o Literature and LLS 442 Latina Literature in Fall 2020.

# POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

## ELIZABETH VELASQUEZ ESTRADA

Dr. Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada earned her M.A. (2013) and Ph.D. (2017) in Anthropology from the University of Texas, Austin. Elizabeth grew up in a working-class neighborhood during the Salvadoran Civil War and migrated to the U.S. as a young adult. These experiences shaped her research and teaching interests: violence and grassroots peacemaking; migration and transnational feminisms; and the politics of intersectional inequalities and justice. She has published in *Social Justice* and co-authored an article with a collective of activist feminist scholars in *Cultural Anthropology*. Her scholarly work seeks to produce knowledge that supports holistic, sustainable peace.



Elizabeth's book in progress, *Intersectional Justice Denied: Negative Peace and Persisting Violence in Post-Peace Accords El Salvador*, draws on two and a half years of ethnographic research. Her work examines the paradox of Salvadoran gang members who are simultaneously purveyors of violence and peacemakers. In 2012 rival MS-13 and Pandilla 18 gangs initiated a truce with each other and the state, citing the gendered principle of "protecting the family and the nation" as motivation for their peacemaking practices. Elizabeth's manuscript traces how working-class women relatives of gang members engage in conflicting politics of solidarity with youth gangs' peacemaking efforts and explores their demands for intersectional justice.

In the Department, Elizabeth will prepare her book manuscript for publication and deepen her research on how gang members and their relatives are developing a critique of the state-led racialization of youth gangs.

Dr. Velasquez Estrada will teach LLS 343 Criminalization and Punishment: US-Central America, A Transnational Perspective in Spring 2021.

## YESSICA GARCIA HERNANDEZ



Dr. Yessica Garcia Hernandez is an Assistant Professor and filmmaker in the Latina/Latino Studies Department at San Francisco State University. She received her Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, San Diego. She currently teaches courses that focus on gender and sexualities. Her research has been awarded grants from the Ford Foundation, AAUW, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, UC-MEXUS, Critical Refugee Collective, and MANA Latina Foundation. She is currently working on two book manuscripts. The first, *Intoxicated by Jenni Rivera*:

*The Erotics of Fandom and Sonic Pedagogies of Deviance* examines how late singer Jenni Rivera fan gatherings, both inside and outside the concert space shed light on Latinx sexuality, working-class pleasures, and (anti)respectability politics. Her second manuscript, *Latinx Perversities: Fat Sexuality and the Porn Industry* (tentative title) explores the representation and labor of Latinas in the adult industry particularly their participation in the BBW genre.

Dr. Garcia Hernandez will teach LLS 240 Latina/o Popular Culture in Spring 2021.

## Teachers Ranked Excellent

### SUMMER 2019

Diana Leon-Boys TA-LLS 100

### FALL 2019

Adrian Burgos HIST 200, 280

Lisa Cacho LLS 220, 320

Nancy Cardenas Gonzalez TA-LLS 100

David Coyoca LLS 242

Julie Dowling LLS 392, 596

Natalie Lira LLS 235

Juan Mora TA-LLS 100

Fiona Ngo AAS 120

Sandra Ruiz LLS 385, 496

Edna Viruell-Fuentes LLS 473

### SPRING 2020

Eddie Bonilla LLS 238

Adrian Burgos HIST 390

David Coyoca LLS 265, 357

Julie Dowling LLS 355, 490

Dara Goldman SPAN 254

Monica Gonzalez CI 415

Rochelle Gutierrez CI 404

Jonathan Inda LLS 387

Natalie Lira LLS 279

Maria Lopez Garcia LLS 240

Jorge Mena Robles LLS 396

Idalia Nuñez Cortez CI 477

Sandra Ruiz LLS 596, ENGL 396



# SENIOR PROJECTS OF THE CLASS OF 2020

Researching and writing a senior paper in the LLS 490 class or a senior thesis is a requirement for the LLS major. The senior class of LLS majors spent all of spring semester working on their senior projects or working one-on one with a professor on the senior thesis with the plan to present their research at the traditional end-of-the-academic year LLS major symposium in May. However, the COVID-19 crisis interrupted those plans. While the 12 students were not able to present their work in an in-person symposium, on May 2nd they briefly presented their projects over Zoom and brunch to the Latina/Latino Studies faculty and staff. It was a casual event where the students talked about their projects and entertained questions from the participants.



**James A. Chavez, "Laws Make Discrimination Legal"**



**Rocio Salazar, "Mujeres Atrevidas: The Chicana Movement in Pilsen"**



**Denisse Gaitan, "Afro-Latinxs in Podcasts: Storytelling in New York"**



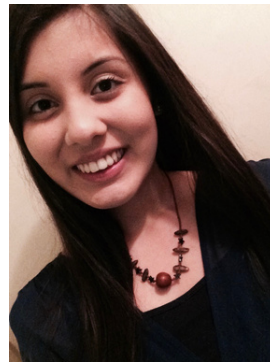
**Ivan Saucedo, "City Under Siege"**



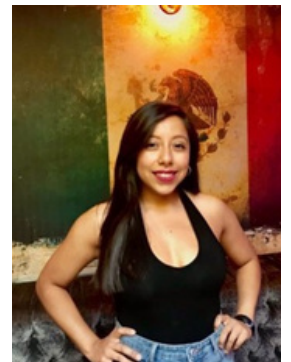
**Jonatan Alcaide, "La masculinidad no viene en una talla: Analysis of Different Portrayals of Masculinity within Latino Music Artists"**



**Nailene Gonzalez, "Housing Policies Gone Awry: The Reality of Latinx Segregation in Chicago"**



**Vanessa Jacinto, "The Influence of Latina/o Greek Letter Organizations on Latino Students in Higher Education"**



**Maritza Palafox, "Cerrando Las Piernas: The Power Held Over Brown Bodies in The United States"**



**Kerime Alejo, "Afro-Latinos and the Importance of Identity Through Bachata"**



**Elizabeth A. Fahey Rodriguez, "The Body Speaks Back: Transnational Resonance Under Patriarchal Violence"**



**Yanira Quezada, "The Ramifications of the Racialized Criminalization of Cannabis: Who Benefits from the Legalization of Recreational Cannabis?"**



**Michelle Romo, "Selling Out: Understanding the Neighborhood Impacts of Factories in La Villita"**



# Nuestra Verdad Publicación: Who We Are

By: Patricia Bejarano, Fatima Valerio, and Marlene Santos

## What is Nuestra Verdad Publicación?

*Nuestra Verdad Publicación* (NUVE) is an online publication focusing on Latinx and Hispanic culture, news, and art through media. Our goal is to bring light to the struggles and triumphs of the Latinx/Hispanic society, and to promote a community that exemplifies the true Latinx/Hispanic spirit on campus.

## Our Inspiration

In the spring of 2019, as 5 first-gen, latinx freshmen from Chicago, we were still adapting to a completely different environment than most of us were used to. At the same time, the majority of us were taking LLS 100 and were learning about a vast array of historical and contemporary topics. Some of these topics involved the struggles of race, class, and gender that we had never learned before in our many years of education. Frustrated by our personal experiences on campus and a forgotten history of Latinos/Hispanics here in the U.S, we wanted to take action. An absence of a minority-based publication on campus led us to believe that this should be our direction in order to represent the very issues that were bothering us and establish a platform where others can do the same. If we didn't take action, then who would?

Starting a Registered Student Organization (RSO) was not easy, and we are still learning as we go. While LLS 100 was our biggest inspiration in creating NUVE, we had several other inspirations. On campus, there is a lack of Latinx representation in the news media and we wanted our community to be heard. When meeting with Jorge Mena, assistant director of La Casa Cultural Latina, we learned of *La Carta Nuestra* and became inspired to start an RSO like them. *La Carta Nuestra* was a former publication on campus that focused on "social justice, solidarity among POC and the issues that impact people of intersecting social identities." Also, one of our members had a friend at the University of Michigan that was a part of a Latinx magazine known as *Latinidad Magazine* and inspired us to make a magazine-like publication.

## Why the name?

While we did spend quite a few hours brainstorming names, the name *Nuestra Verdad* simply clicked as it was a literal representation of what we were trying to show: Our Truth. Everything we planned to publish and have published is our truth of the Latinx/Hispanic experience not only on campus, but historically and globally as well. Additionally, we hoped to publish articles, photos, artwork, poems, short stories, and columns to showcase everything about us.

## What has been accomplished so far?

This academic school year from fall of 2019 through spring of 2020 has been successful for us. With over 27 articles and content published, we continue to work on our goals and make our vision become a reality. As a new organization, it was very rewarding when over 100 people signed up on Quad Day, and although the number of actual members is not 100, we still felt accomplished in knowing that there are many students interested in what we have to offer.

We were able to host our very first fundraiser that provided us with the funds to maintain our website subscription for another year, and we have begun the process of collaborating with other RSOs! Our goal is to continue to grow as a team and have more people on and off campus know about us. We hope to be able to publish more content on our website and to continue to inspire and offer a space for people to feel included and heard. *Nuestra Verdad* was created to promote our triumphs as Latinx/Hispanics and to show that even though we are in a predominantly white institution, we can still be united and tell our truths.

## How to find us?

If you want to share your story or content, do not hesitate to contact us. Everyone is welcome to join, however, you do not need to be a part of NUVE to have your voice heard! Email us at [nuveuiuc@gmail.com](mailto:nuveuiuc@gmail.com) or find us on any of our social media platforms (Facebook: [/NUVEPUB](#); Instagram: [@nuveuiuc](#); Twitter: [@nuveuiuc](#)). Follow us for more updates and check out our website at [www.nuestraverdad.com](http://www.nuestraverdad.com).



Top Row (L-R): Marlene Santos, Hernan Juarez, Patricia Bejarano. Bottom Row (L-R): Jessica Cruz-Taylor, Fatima Valerio.



Top Row(L-R) Julissa Sanchez, Victor Figueroa. Bottom Row (L-R) Andrea Czar, Patricia Bejarano, Fatima Valerio, Marlene Santos.



(L-R) Fatima Valerio, Marlene Santos, Jessica Cruz-Taylor, Patricia Bejarano, Hernan Juarez



Top Row Standing (L-R): Alberto Castelan, Arturo Romero. Second Row Standing (L-R): Sophia Diaz, Julissa Sanchez, Patricia Bejarano, Fatima Valerio, Jessica Cruz-Taylor. First Row Kneeling (L-R): Marlene Santos, Erendira Martinez, Ashley Martinez.



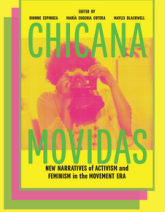
# CHICANA MOVIDAS: NEW NARRATIVES OF ACTIVISM AND FEMINISM IN THE MOVEMENT ERA

A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION AND BOOK CELEBRATION WITH EDITORS OF THE VOLUME  
MARIA EUGENIA COTERA & MAYTEI BLACKWELL

Please join us for a discussion and book signing to celebrate the publication of *Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era*. Edited by Donna Epifanio, Maria Cotera, and Mayte Blackwell, *Chicana Movidas* includes contributions from a wide array of scholars and activists, including leading Chicana feminists from the period. It is the first collection of scholarly essays and testimonies that focuses on Chicana organizing, activism, and leadership in the movement years. The essays in this groundbreaking collection demonstrate how Chicana enacted a new kind of politics as the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality, and developed innovative concepts, tactics, and methodologies that in turn generated new theories, art forms, organizational spaces, and strategies of alliances. In this roundtable discussion and book celebration, co-editors Maria Cotera and Mayte Blackwell will discuss the volume and its interventions and will be available to sign copies of the book, which will be on sale at the event.

MARIA EUGENIA COTERA is an associate professor in the Departments of Women's Studies and American Culture and the Program in Latina/Latino Studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. MAYTEI BLACKWELL is an associate professor in the Departments of Chicana and Chicano Studies and Gender Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9  
4:00-5:30PM  
LEVIS FACULTY CENTER,  
ROOM 422  
919 W. ILLINOIS ST



## Revolutionary Research Happens at Illinois

Come learn how the  
Office of Undergraduate Research  
can help you get started!

WHERE?  
Department of Latino/Latina Studies  
1207 W Oregon Street  
Room 133

WHEN?  
October 23  
5 PM - 6 PM

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

La Estación Gallery presents  
**HYPATIA VOURLOUMIS**  
Resonating Practices: A Workshop in  
Rigorous Connectivity across Aesthetic Life-Worlds

Hypatia Vourloumis is a performance theorist working across: archival, feminist, critical race theory, and queer studies; music, politics, philosophies of language, aesthetic theory and practice. She teaches theory at the Dutch Art Institute. She received her Ph.D. in performance studies at NYU, conducted postdoctoral research at the Interweaving Performance Cultures Research Center at Free University in Berlin, and was a 2016 fellow at the Research Center for the Humanities in Athens. She is co-editor of *Performance Research Journal* 'On Institutions' and has published in journals, art catalogues and edited volumes including *Women & Performance*, *Ephemera*, and *Theatre Journal*. She is currently completing a monograph on postcolonial Indonesian performance and a book on the politics of contemporary Greek art, crisis and performance.

Friday, October 4, 2019, 4:30-5:30PM  
Department of Latina/Latino Studies  
1207 W. Oregon St.  
RSVP by 9/29/2019 to laestaciongallery12@gmail.com  
(limited seating available)

DEPARTMENT OF LATINA/LATINO STUDIES

### Assembling Laboring Bodies: Migrant Domestic Work and the Aesthetics of Precarity

Dr. Maria Lopez-Garcia  
Postdoctoral Research Associate

This talk explores the relationship between the racial performativity of domestic work, migrant subjectivity, and precarity in migrant domestic work. Analyzing the work of Filipina and Latin American domestic workers, Kimberly Arreola, Claudia Cano, and Imelda Cajigas-Endas among others, this presentation inquires about the implications of situating the laboring body of migrant domestic workers as a performing body. This research highlights how the laboring body while rendered visible through aesthetic practices displays a relational vision of the racialized and gendered scripts underwritten by shared genealogies of colonialism and the global surveillance. The aesthetics emerging from "feeling home" while caring for others in America, as I will show in this presentation, offers a collective refusal to the social and economic devaluation of domestic workers' lives and labor, as an emancipatory project that allows for the social recognition of domestic labor and for alternative ways of negotiating subjectivity. The archive analyzed in this presentation conveys valuable examples of the decolonial and anti-capitalist epistemic perspective of domestic labor's regressive culture.

Wednesday,  
October 30  
4:00 - 5:30 PM  
217 Noyes Lab  
www.LLS.Illinois.edu



### COME LEARN ABOUT THE PEACE CORPS

Volunteer · Travel · Make a Difference

Wednesday, November 6, 2019  
5:00 - 6:00pm  
Latina/Latino Studies Building, 1207 W. Oregon, Urbana  
Room 133

If you're interested in grassroots-driven international development, have foreign language skills, and want to travel, consider joining the Peace Corps after graduation. The Peace Corps is looking for U.S. citizens with four-year degrees to fill positions in agriculture, community development, education, environment, health, and youth development in 60+ countries. You could be working with internally displaced persons in Ukraine, improving food security in Senegal, promoting Spanish literacy in the Dominican Republic, or teaching English in Cambodia. Come by to learn more about the types of projects that Peace Corps Volunteers work on, benefits during and after service, and the application process.

Contact [peacecorps@illinois.edu](mailto:peacecorps@illinois.edu) with any questions.

Hosted by the Department of Latina/Latino Studies and the Career Center



### LLS Holiday Fun!

Friday, December 6 • 5-7pm • LLS conference room, 1207 W. Oregon, Urbana

Come join us for crafts, games,  
music and yummy food!



LLS POSTDOCTORAL COLLOQUIUM SERIES

### Chicana/o Communists and the Fights for Chicano Studies and MEChA During the 1970s and 1980s

Dr. Eddie Bonilla,  
Postdoctoral Research Associate

"Chicano liberation for us would be won in the context of socialism" claimed former Chicano communist Bill Gallegos. During the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s students and activists like Gallegos sought to create radical change to societal institutions such as higher education as well as in the fight for the creation of Chicano studies. Various ideologies including cultural nationalism, Marxism, and liberationism were embraced by Chicano students and activists. This presentation will examine the often ignored story of how some people moved towards Marxism and communism in order to fight for the self-determination and liberation of Chicano communities. The presentation asks why it was that people moved towards Marxism even during the global Cold War? Why have they been treated the outsiders in the Chicano movement by activists and scholars? And what happens when we place Chicano communists in the center of the movement?

Wednesday,  
September 25  
4:00 - 5:30 PM  
217 Noyes Lab

### HANDSHAKE WORKSHOP @LLS

Looking for a summer job or a job after your graduate?  
Come learn about Handshake!  
Handshake is a helpful job search tool available to all students. Julie Higgs of the Humanities Professional Resource Center will talk about the ins and outs of Handshake and help you create and/or enhance your Handshake account.  
Bring your laptop! Snacks provided!

Wednesday, February 19  
5:00-6:30pm  
LLS building, 1207 W. Oregon, Room 133





# LLS EVENTS

la  
estación  
gallery

## Spring 2020 Event Schedule

Wednesday, March 4th 11:30-3:00  
MEET (SOME OF) THE ARTISTS OF  
OBJECTS WHO HOLD OBJECTS WHO LET GO  
SENSING MEMORY

Friday, April 3rd 3:30-5:00  
PODCASTING LANDSCAPES

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
LIGHT SNACKS PROVIDED  
1207 W. OREGON ST., URBANA, IL  
DEPARTMENT OF LATINA/LATINO STUDIES

LASTESTACIONGALLERY.WEBSITE.COM



La Estación Gallery presents

Patricia Nguyen

Breathe  
Form  
Freedom



November 1, 2019, 4:30-6 PM  
Department of Latina/Latino Studies  
1207 W. Oregon Street

Nguyen is an artist, educator, and scholar born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. She received her Ph.D. in Performance Studies from Northwestern University and has published work in *Winter Studies Quarterly*, *Harvard Kennedy School's Asian American Policy Review*, *Women and Performance: The Journal of the American Academy of Modern Asian*. As a performance artist, Nguyen has exhibited and performed at the Nita Sui Collection in Vietnam, Mexican Cultural Center in San Francisco, Jane Adams Hull House, Proper Queerworld, Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Chile. She is also the co-founder and executive director of Ada Lab, a community arts organization based in Chicago. Currently, she is Director of Undergraduate Studies and Assistant Professor of Instruction in Asian American Studies at Northwestern University. Nguyen is also an award-winning memorial designer for the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project, the first memorial in the United States to honor survivors of police violence.

RSVP to this workshop by October 23, 2019 here: [laestaciongallery123@gmail.com](mailto:laestaciongallery123@gmail.com)



## LLS Cares

Breaking borders through self & community care in black and brown landscapes.

Wednesdays  
February 26 @ 6:30 Yoga & Tea

March 25 @ 6:30 Yoga & Tea

April 22 @ 6:30 Yoga & Tea

\*Mats will be provided.\*

Questions? Contact: [LLSCarescare@gmail.com](mailto:LLSCarescare@gmail.com)

\*\*\*LLS Cares will meet at Fraser Hall 3rd floor, 906 S Goodwin Ave, Urbana, IL

How do we get to Yoga class in Fraser Hall?

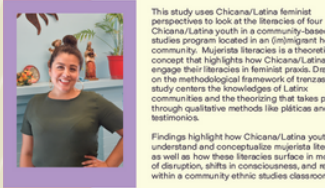
Step 1: Coming in from Goodwin take the elevator on the left to the 3rd floor.

Step 2: Once on the 3rd floor turn left, there will be a sign! Yay!



## DEPARTMENT OF LATINA/LATINO STUDIES ALUMNI LECTURE SERIES

"We Have a Strong Way of Thinking . . . and it shows through Our Words": Exploring Mujerista Literacies with Chicana/Latina Youth in a Community Ethnic Studies Course



Prof. Mónica González Ybarra  
Department of Curriculum & Instruction  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Findings highlight how Chicana/Latina youth understand and conceptualize mujerista literacies, as well as how these literacies surface in moments of disruption, shifts in consciousness, and reflection within a community ethnic studies classroom.



Wednesday, February 5  
4:00pm  
Room 133, Latina/Latino Studies



Wednesday, September 11  
4:00-6:00pm  
1207 W. Oregon,  
Room 133,  
Urbana



## DEPARTMENT OF LATINA/LATINO STUDIES

"Genealogies of Empowerment and the Makings of Home"  
A Dialogue with LLS Alumni



Xavier Ramirez  
Assistant Professor, Chicana/Latina Studies  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dr. Minerva Velazquez  
Assistant Professor, Chicana/Latina Studies & Policy Studies  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The history of Latina/o/x students in higher education is part of a larger genealogy of activism. The LLS Cares & Latina/Latino Studies murals, parts of which have returned to our campus and are being celebrated today, are a symbol of this legacy of activism and student claims of belonging in higher education universities like the University of Illinois. From Chicago to Champaign, Latina/o students in the 1970s began to challenge their limited status in institutions of higher learning, such as the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Latina/Latino Studies alumna Dr. Minerva Velazquez (UIUC, B.A. 2004, M.A. 2007, Ph.D. 2010) and Xavier Ramirez (UIUC, B.A. 2015) will speak on the need to historically document and learn from the history of Latina/o/x students within these institutions.

Friday, February 21  
2:30-3:30pm  
LLS building 1207 W. Oregon, room 103

LLS.ILLINOIS.EDU | 217.265.0370 | 1207 W. OREGON, URBANA IL 61801



# Objects Who Hold | Objects Who Let Go



## by Melody Contreras

La Estación Gallery welcomed guests on December 13th and 14th, 2019 for its new exhibition: *Objects Who Hold | Objects Who Let Go*. It surrounded the work of 8 artists who were enrolled in the Curating Performance seminar taught and curated by LLS Professor Sandra Ruiz. In addition, the collective worked closely with LLS staff-Laura and Alicia in all events and arrangements for the show.

The exhibition had a specific intention in mind. As the curatorial remark, "The group exhibition *Objects Who Hold | Objects Who Let Go* asks the audience to suspend their senses into the life-world of objects; objects who carry and release personal stories of suffering, pleasure, desire, and abundant afterlives. How does holding onto a feeling, an entity, a moment in time also force one to let it go? And how can we learn to both withhold and release the very memories that bridge gaps between permanence and ephemerality? This show drives the spectator to embrace this tension of holding on and letting go as we all engage with experimental works that demand a tender and critical understanding of race, gender, sexuality, and the exuberant life and death of all their differences... All objects who hold on are also objects who will eventually let go. From video and sound art, sculpture and live performance, to multisensory installations and performative drawing, these artists embrace the dynamic interplay of object, subject, and spectator in an attempt to forge open and affectionate new worlds."

In preparation, the seminar course led two public workshops with Dr. Hypatia Vourloumis and Dr. Patricia Nyguen. "Resonating Practices: A Workshop with Hypatia Vourloumis" centered around the aesthetics of rigorous connectivity in the necessity of everyday life. "Breathe, Form, and Freedom: A Workshop with Dr. Patricia Nguyen" followed the form of breathing and how it is a purposeful method of survival within singular bodies. The seminar course also had the

opportunity to attend a sound and light masterclass with performance artist and sound musician, Erica Gressman.

The collective had about 2 weeks to prepare the space for the opening event. Each individual dedicated much of their free time to paint, brainstorm, and check-in with the other artists, to ensure a seamless set-up. After weeks of intensive and meticulous energy, the gallery was flawlessly opened to the public. Following the curatorial remark, "For de Leon in *A spoonful of brown sugar*, the history of cultural pain speaks to the future of social change. Her work addresses the frustration of being a minoritarian subject in everyday life by disidentifying and riding the fine line of invitation and confrontation. In gripping history tightly to preserve inherited memories, *Segev in Mielczarskiego 5, Łódź, Poland (subtractive charcoal translation)* embodies and endures the act of listening and resurrects kinship by both remembering and interpreting the past. In the three iterations of *the champ*, s.g. privileges the ephemerality of touch and being touched by activating queer failure and questioning the limit and potentiality of radical intimacy. In Coby's *Griefwork (Red Ice)*, the animation of loss reveals the self-consuming, but also

universal quality of mourning. For this artist, griefwork is inherently lonely; it's the object's presence that renders this singular act a plural engagement with the senses. In *Sit With Me*, the quotidian act of breathing forces us to feel the burden of queer and Brown existence. Reyes leaves us breathless in order to exhale a different modality for living under the precepts of colonial exhaustion. In a desire to be wanted in a world that renders certain life-forces invisible, Netti welcomes the spectator to share a breath with her. *Inhaling Over Time* blurs the thick line between matter and life, human and institution through a press, a gentle prod, an opening and closing. In *Lengua Madre*, Camacho Valencia's mother tongues demand to be heard; in listening for the viewer's affective responses, she restructures language, sound, and sight, staging scenes between a given discourse and a performed identity. For Contreras, meaning is material and spirit, feeling and becoming. In *waterless borders*, cultivating community requires unearthing landscapes for possibility by declaring an intention for something other." The opening was beautiful and celebrated the stupendous critical work the artists had blossomed in those 3 months of working together.



## Featured Artists:

Paulina Camacho Valencia  
Melody Contreras  
Laura M. Coby  
Alicia O. De León  
s.g. maldonado-vélez  
Katie Netti  
Tamar Segev  
Daniel Reyes

To learn more about the gallery you can visit <http://laestaciongallery.weebly.com/?fbclid=IwAR3jOzu0qyFv9XIPnMdw7frvj2CtF55mPfbXGB90x2rJbvxi0GaN3lYMeK>

## Instagram

[https://www.instagram.com/la\\_estacion\\_gallery/](https://www.instagram.com/la_estacion_gallery/)

## Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/laestaciongalleryuiuc/>

## Podcast with the Artists

<https://soundcloud.com/user-605923905>



# Behind the Board: Eugenic Sterilizations in North Carolina

by Kerime Alejo, Ivan Saucedo, Fatima Valerio, and Dr. Natalie Lira

In the late 1960s, Elaine Riddick, a fourteen-year-old Black girl was sterilized while giving birth. Doctors and the North Carolina Eugenics Board considered her “promiscuous,” despite the fact that her pregnancy was the result of a rape, and “unable to get along with others.” While there was a consent form for the operation, it was signed with an “x” by her grandmother who could not read. It’s unclear if her grandmother understood what the surgery meant and Elaine, herself, didn’t know she had been sterilized until she was 19 and wanted to have more children.

Elaine’s experience is heartbreaking, but it was not unique. From the early 1900s and into the 1970s, approximately 60,000 people were sterilized in the United States. These sterilizations occurred under eugenic sterilization laws designed to limit the reproduction of the “unfit” in 32 states. North Carolina was one of the few states that established an official Eugenics Board, in charge of determining who should be sterilized. This Eugenics Board approved over 7,000 sterilizations and North Carolina had one of the longest running programs, ordering sterilizations into the 1970s. Furthermore, North Carolina set a precedent in addressing this historic injustice by paying reparations to the victims of eugenic sterilization in 2013. This is when Elaine Riddick came forward to detail her powerful story.

Taking North Carolina as a case study, 8 undergraduates spent Spring 2020 collecting demographic and descriptive data from the meeting minutes collected by the North Carolina Eugenics Board in order to document and understand the patterns of sterilization. Our research team is part of a larger research project titled “Demographic Patterns of Eugenic Sterilization in Four U.S. States: Mixed Methods Investigation of Reproductive Control of the ‘Unfit.’” Funded by the National Institutes of Health, this project is a collaboration between Dr. Lira and scholars at University of Iowa, University of Michigan and Rutgers to build and analyze datasets on eugenic sterilization in California, Iowa, North Carolina and Michigan. The goal of the project is to examine how eugenic stereotypes about race, gender, sexual behavior and disability influenced decisions about who was “unfit” and who should be sterilized. While few of the people sterilized in North Carolina were Latina/o, we have been mobilizing questions and analytical lenses that are central to Latina/o Studies. Specifically, we are examining the ways that race, nationality, gender, class, sexuality and disability have been used to establish social hierarchies and justify state interventions into the reproductive lives of marginalized populations.

The data entry process is multifaceted and hands-on, providing the team insight into the different ways racialized medicalization occurs. As researchers, we note the characteristics of each case in addition to other factors such as where the procedure was administered, who consented to the operation, the reason for sterilization and the ultimate decision of the Eugenics Board. All details are documented as sterilization reports are analyzed and diligently reviewed. The research process is collaborative, and we assist each other in assessing and labeling sensitive data in these decades-old archival records. Our team transitions from working independently on data collection to bi-weekly meetings while also balancing academics and personal responsibilities.

Working on this research team has been an eye-opening experience. Over the course of the semester, we had been expanding our historical knowledge on eugenic sterilization in North Carolina and building a skillset that is relevant in the fields of Latina/o Studies, History, and Public Health. The North Carolina Eugenics Board records are black and white, and they help us understand what sterilization victims went through. Building the dataset reveals the dehumanization of specific marginalized communities in the state; primarily Black, disabled, and working-class people. Members of the Eugenics Board showed a complete disregard for bodily autonomy and the reproductive future of the victims involved. The rationales given for sterilizations were not only inconsistent but also revealed racism and bias among the Eugenics Board members. In the case of Elaine Riddick, being mislabeled as “promiscuous,” even though she was raped, was enough justification for the Eugenics Board to sterilize her. The larger significance of this history remains as racialized communities continue to experience marginalization, racism, and substandard care in medical settings today.



Top from left: Armando Miranda, Mia Martinez, Kerime Alejo. Middle from left: Mia Seeley, Dr. Natalie Lira, Ivan Saucedo. Bottom from left: Fatima Valerio, Valerie Garcia. Not pictured: Mariah Jiles.

# FACULTY, STAFF & AFFILIATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Eddie Bonilla** will be a Postdoctoral Fellow in Latinx Studies in the History Department at the University Center for International Studies at University of Pittsburgh starting in Fall 2020.

**Adrian Burgos** completed *¡Pleibo! In the Barrios and the Big Leagues*, a book co-authored with Margaret Salazar-Porzio and Robin Morey which will be published in October 2020 by the Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press. He continued to work as a public-facing scholar, presenting on the “Public Engagement Strategies” panel at the University of Michigan’s *A Vision for the Humanities PhD in the 21st Century* conference, and on a panel on African Americans and Baseball History at the Double Duty Classic hosted by the Chicago White Sox at Guaranteed Rate Stadium. He also appeared as a guest speaker via Zoom for “Baseball in US History,” a course jointly offered by the University of Missouri–Kansas City and University of Missouri–St. Louis. He wrote 25 articles for public venues such as *La Vida Baseball and Memories & Dreams* and was interviewed for stories on Latinos in baseball by *NBC Latino*, *NPR* (twice), *New York Daily News*, and *Toronto Star*.

**Julie Dowling** is serving as Chair of the Census National Advisory Committee for Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations. She is in her sixth year on the committee which advises the Census on counting vulnerable communities including racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, and persons experiencing homelessness. In addition to her work directly with the Census, she has done multiple presentations and consultations this year with legislators and non-profit groups on census issues. In August 2019, Dowling presented on Census 2020 at a convening of state legislative Latino/a leaders from across the country. At the state-level, Dowling met with legislators from across the state, speaking with both the State of Illinois’ Census Advisory Panel and the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus conference in November 2019. At the local level, in early March 2020, Dowling organized and led a multiple-panel event at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, open to the public, where scholars as well as local, state, and national advocacy groups met to discuss the challenges of Census 2020.

**Mónica González Ybarra** presented her research on Chicana/Latina pre-service teachers on the border at the 2019 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Conference in Baltimore, MA. She also presented her research on Chicana/Latina youth in a community ethnic studies course for the Department of Latina/Latino Studies in the spring of 2020. The findings from that project were published in “We have a strong way of thinking...and it shows through our words’: Exploring Mujerista Literacies with Chicana/Latina Youth,” *Research in the Teaching of English* (2020). Other publications from spring 2020 include: Gonzales, L. & González Ybarra, M. (2020). Multimodal Cuentos: Language & Literacies of Transfronterizx Youth. *English Education*; and Rodriguez, G. & González Ybarra, M. (2020). Exploring los Facultades of Latinx Youth in the Era of 45. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*.

**Rochelle Gutierrez** was awarded a \$500,000 Spencer Foundation grant, along with fellow principal investigators, Kari Kokka (University of Pittsburgh) and Marrielle Myers (Kennesaw State University) (April 2020–December 2024). Their project, titled *Political conocimiento in teaching mathematics: Preparing teachers to advocate for students*, seeks to prepare teachers to use creative insubordination in their everyday work so that they can deconstruct systemic racial injustices and stand up to the politics that dehumanize Indigenous, Black, and other historically oppressed students. Other accomplishment for Gutierrez include the Circle Holder award (Science for the People, 2019–Lifetime appointment); Innovations in Research in Equity and Social Justice in Teacher Education Award (American Educational Research Association, Division K, 2020); featured mathematician (LATHISMS/Latinx/Hispanics in the Mathematical Sciences, 2019); James R. C. Leitzel Lecturer, recognizing innovations in mathematical sciences education at the undergraduate or graduate level (Mathematics Association of America, 2019); Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching Award (College of Education, University of Illinois, 2018–2019); and Gutiérrez, R. & Liboiron, M. (2019), Strong animals: Humility in science, Excerpt published in *Science for the People*. 22(2), 66–69 (<https://magazine.scienceforthepeople.org/>).

**Jonathan X. Inda** completed an article titled “Fatal Prescriptions: Immigration Detention, Mismatched Medication, and the Necropolitics of Uncare” that will appear in the journal *Death Studies*. The article focuses on detention care and its deadly consequences in the United States. Between October 2003 and October 2019, there were at least 196 deaths in Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody, many the result of grossly inadequate medical practices. Drawing on the case of Juan Carlos Baires, who was denied antiretroviral medication, the essay argues that, rather than being beneficiaries of care, noncitizens in detention are often victims of uncare—of a dearth or absence of both affective (concern about) and practical (providing for) care. The consequence of this uncare is that migrant lives are imperiled to the point of death.



**Diana Leon-Boys** published an article with **Angharad Valdivia** in the *Journal of Children and Media*, titled "The Location of US Latinidad: Stuck in the Middle, Disney, and the in-between ethnicity" (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17482798.2020.1753790>). In 2019 Leon-Boys book chapter, "A Latina Captain: Decentering Latinidad through Audience Constructions in *Dexter*," was published in *Latina/o/x Communication Studies: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. In Fall 2020 Leon-Boys will start a tenure-track position as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of South Florida where she will specialize in digital media and Latinx Studies.

**Maria Eugenia Lopez-Garcia** will be a Bridge to the Faculty Postdoctoral Research Associate in Museum and Exhibition Studies (MUSE) at the University of Illinois at Chicago starting in Fall 2020.

**Isabel Molina-Guzmán** is now the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion in the College of LAS, changed from the previous title of Faculty Director for Diversity and Inclusion. She was featured in *Parade Magazine* in an online interview with Frederick Aldama given her research expertise on Latinas on television (<https://uapress.arizona.edu/2020/04/isabel-molina-guzman-talks-latinx-tv-pop-culture-in-a-new-vid>). In addition, she published an essay on the continuing lack of diversity in Hollywood, "Why Hollywood Remains So White and a Note on How to Change It," in *The Myth of Colorblindness: Race and Ethnicity in American Cinema* (Palgrave 2019). And she published an essay on news coverage of Puerto Rico during the Hurricane Maria news coverage, "Gender, Race, and Power: The Gendered Racialization of Puerto Ricans in TV News Coverage of Hurricane Maria" in *Journalism, Gender and Power* (Routledge, 2019). She continues to lead the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Alicia P. Rodriguez** presented in a panel, titled "Latina/o/x Student Belonging at a PWI in the midst of Past & Present Political Times," with Betoel Escobar, Jorge Mena Robles and Gioconda Guerra Perez at the 2019 NCORE (National Conference on Race & Ethnicity in American Higher Education) Conference.

**Gilberto Rosas** was awarded the Conrad Humanities Scholar Award, a 5-year appointment which recognizes mid-career scholars with the highest potential for continued achievement in humanities fields. He has a forthcoming book with John Hopkins University Press with the working title *Border of Death*, analyzing the deep roots of this latest moment of xenophobic practices at the US-Mexico border. Along with Professor Mireya Loza (New York University) they are readying *The Border Reader* for production at Duke University Press. Rosas was part of a large research team of scholars from across the Illinois campus analyzing the daily effects of COVID-19 in southern Illinois.

**Sandra Ruiz** published a book in 2019 titled *Ricanness: Enduring Time in Anticolonial Performance* (<https://nyupress.org/9781479825684/ricanness/>) where she traveled to present on it in Amsterdam, New York City, Hawaii, and Chicago during the 2019-20 academic year. Ruiz is the editor for the book series *Minoritarian Aesthetics* with NYU Press (<https://nyupress.org/minoritarian-aesthetics/>). She published an article entitled "Performance" for the book *The Routledge History of American Sexuality*. Ruiz curated the exhibition *Objects Who Hold/Objects Who Let Go* for *La Estación Gallery*. In 2019 Ruiz was awarded both the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and Provost Campus Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, named a Helen Corely Petit Scholar, and received the Sue Divan's Producer's Fund Award from the Department of Theatre. Recently, she earned tenure and is now an Associate Professor of Latina/Latino Studies and English.

**Lettycia Terrones** published "Praxis of Refusal: Self-Fashioning and Throwing Attitude in The First Rule of Punk," in the book *Nerds, Goths, Geeks, and Freaks: Outsiders in Chicanx and Latinx Young Adult Literature* (edited by Trevor Buffone and Cristina Herrera, University Press of Mississippi, 2020, pp. 31-44).

**Angharad N. Valdivia** published *The Gender of Latinidad: Uses and Abuses of Hybridity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell/Wiley, 2020). She was elected a Fellow of the International Communication Association in 2020. She published "#IntersectionalActivism: Tales of Origin and Intersectional Negotiations" (2020) in *Interactions: Studies in Communication and Culture* and "Girls Hold up Half the Sky: Global Narratives of Gender Equity meet Neoliberal Philanthropy" (2019) in *Girlhood Studies* (11:3, 84-100). She co-authored with **Diana Leon-Boys** an article in the *Journal of Children and Media*, titled "The Location of US Latinidad: Stuck in the Middle, Disney, and the in-between ethnicity" (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17482798.2020.1753790>). She published a number of book chapters: "Citification, Mediatization, Theme Park-ification of the contemporary US Midwest University" (2020), in *Spaces of New Colonialism: Reading Schools, Museums and Cities in the Tumult of Globalization* (C. McCarthy et. al. (Eds.), New York: Peter Lang); "What Can We Get Away With? The Ethics of Art and Entertainment in a Neoliberal World" (2020) in *The Handbook of Media Ethics* (2nd Edition, L. Wilkins and C. Christians (Eds.), New York: Routledge); "Digital Utopias, Latina/o Mediated Realities" (2020) in *Latin American Digital Studies* (J. C. Rodriguez and H. D. Fernandez L'Hoeste (Eds.), Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press); and "The Futures of Latina/o/x Communication Studies: A Plática with Senior Scholars" (2019) in *Latina/o Communication Studies: Theories, Methods, and Practice* (L. Hinojosa Hernandez, S. De Los Santos Upton, D. I. Bowen, and A. R. Martinez (Eds.), New York: Lexington Books).

**Oscar E. Vázquez** published his edited anthology *Academies and Schools of Art in Latin America* (Routledge), and has been awarded an Ailsa Mellon Bruce Senior Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC), for the academic year 2020-21. There, he will be researching and writing a new book on the academic practice and pedagogy of copying and drawing the human body.

# University Celebrates the Restoration of the La Casa and Latina/Latino Studies Mural



(Spurlock Museum)

**By: Zulema Herrera**

Alumnus and muralist Oscar Martinez returned to the University to witness the celebration and showcase of the mural that he and other students created, despite the controversy it sparked 45 years ago when it was painted.

On February 21, 2020 the presentation of the mural was split into two separate viewing events where the mural panels were recently installed; one was held at the Illini Union and the other at the Spurlock Museum. The mural was originally created by Martinez and students in 1975 and completed by Martinez in 2004. It was located in the former location of La Casa Cultural Latina and the Department of Latina/Latino Studies.

The mural continues to be a symbol of the Latinx student experience at the University and in 1975 marked their hope for a new and improved La Casa [Cultural Latina]. “As soon as we got the keys to La Casa we found out that it was scheduled to be demolished and that’s when I suggested, ‘Why don’t we do a mural that all students can feel that they’re a part of?’ Martinez said, “So that once we leave the University, future generations can be connected to the mural, and actually I must say, it worked.”

Having the mural welcomed by the University and being placed in such prominent areas of foot traffic is a contrast to how the murals were viewed during the time Martinez started painting it. According to Martinez, creating the piece was considered a defacement of property. But to him it was a necessary reaction to sustain La Casa's existence, which had just recently opened.

The February 21 mural celebration event was spread out through the day and was filled with old and new faces, including faculty and students who mingled and reminisced about their time at the University. At the Illini Union, the first noticeable thing while going upstairs to the mural celebration reception is the large mural panel of a woman reaching for the sky. Next to it is the second panel, that Martinez refers to as “The Graduate,” of a person in a cap and gown reaching down to those below him/her. These two mural panels are located in the southwest stairwell of the Illini Union.

As people lingered analyzing the captivating details of the panels, forming many clusters, Martinez walked in and everyone started to surround him greeting and praising his work. He talked to each person, smiling and engaging with as many people as he can, from undergraduate students he has never met, to old friends.

The Spurlock Museum had more than twice the amount of visitors, including previous directors of La Casa, Chancellor Robert Jones and Latino student activists from different generations. The bright sky peered through the surrounding windows as you walked in and were met with a table of glass beverages and nametags. Further inside the museum, the light became dimmer and the three large mural panels with a human figure in each claimed their space. Chatter grew louder and louder as people greeted each other and discussed the murals. A coordinator with a microphone started to grab the attention of the crowd, all went silent, waiting to hear the guest speakers/contributors of the mural.

Each guest speaker either participated in the installment of the panels or were impacted by the mural, including student activists. Generations of Latinx students have faced challenges at the University and have constantly sought for proper representation and resources due to being such a small percentage on campus. Martinez created the mural in protest against the possible destruction of La Casa in 1975. Seventeen years later, in 1992, Latinx students led more protests to call attention to the continued marginalization of Latinx students and to make demands from the University that were very similar to the demands of the students in the 1970s. Although not all student demands were met, they were able to secure a new and bigger building for La Casa, a Latina/o Studies Department, and the hiring of more Latino/a faculty members and students. Mirelsie Velazquez, an alumni and activist, said that when she started school, the mural was the first thing she noticed at La Casa, and seeing it now made her realize she lived in





(The Illini Union)

Alicia P. Rodriguez, academic advisor and administrative coordinator of the Department of Latina/Latino Studies, spoke about students, especially activists like Velazquez and Martinez, who made sacrifices for change.

"Oftentimes students are put in the position of being the moral conscience of the University and it's a shame that the students have to do that, but it's necessary," Rodriguez said. "Some have trouble finishing because they're doing such important work, but they are the moral conscience of the University and that's going to continue, I think, forever."

According to Rodriguez, there is still a lot of progress to be made regarding the retention of Latino students who face challenges such as family obligations at home, financial crises and mental health crises while they try to adapt to the University. She said that they are still underrepresented and marginalized to some degree.

The mural panels installed at the Spurlock Museum will be displayed for the next ten years. By then, Martinez and others expect a new La Casa building to be built to replace the current building that is in a poor condition.

"First of all, I wanted to thank Chancellor Jones for being involved with this whole process even if it was at the end, thank you for opening all of the inboxes," Martinez said. "And I want to not let you off the hook. We do expect a new La Casa, state of the art, like no other University has seen before."

Martinez said he has aspirations for the future of Latinx students and the home that grounds them. He spoke of the importance of student activism throughout previous movements that was sparked after the mural was made in the first La Casa.

"To listen to the speakers my only criticism about that was, I wish there was a student, a current student, getting up there and talking. That's the only part that kind of bothered me a little bit," Martinez said. "Because it was not about me it was about the students and without the students, including when I was a student here, none of this would have happened at all."

Martinez said that he advocates for students, and back when he was a teacher, he would get in trouble for defending them. He said that students are clients, and should be respected and assisted by faculty members, especially by Latinx professors who have the power to defend them.

Ivan Saucedo, a senior majoring in Latina/o studies, said that this event was the highlight of his week and that La Casa has made him feel like he was a part of something. "I feel like La Casa and the Latina/o Studies department are a backbone to my academics here just because of the support and the resources that both departments have," Saucedo said.

"In ten years I feel like La Casa is going to be like the African-American Cultural Center across the street because honestly they have a state of the art facility, as well as because brown students are making an impact on campus."

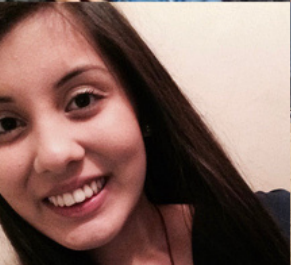
According to Martinez, the mural panels represent the importance of telling your story before you die. He hopes that these murals spark conversations about personal experiences and allows for the sharing of different ideas and cultures.

"I managed to paint the mural and like I said before, having to be looking out for the police every few minutes, it was even more stressful on me," Martinez said. "But I did it. I guess I didn't think a lot about what I was doing in terms of the potential problems in doing what I did. I was dedicated and I believed in what I was doing. And once you believe in something, it's a part of your heart and who you are, and you do it."

almost every panel of the mural.

"I was the student that the machine tried to mold, take in, and spat out as I dropped out of college for several years. I was the student sitting head down pondering my place here, looking for a community, for a place to call home," Valezquez said. "I was then also the beholder of three degrees from this institution now part of the machine holding that very same diploma to a new generation of students."

The "machine" she refers to is shown on one of the mural panels that is labeled where it shows students going in and out of a machine that changes them. Valezquez interprets the machine as something she was able to overcome despite her struggles. She said that she is glad that the University is acknowledging the history of Latinx students like her, instead of trying to erase them.



# CLASS OF 2020 GRADUATES

## UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS

Jonatan Alcaide  
Kerime A. Alejo  
James A. Chavez  
Elizabeth A. Fahey Rodriguez  
Denisse Gaitan  
Nailene Gonzalez  
Ana Gutierrez  
Alejandra Izquierdo  
Vanessa E. Jacinto  
Maritza Palafox  
Yanira Quezada  
Daniel Reyes  
Michelle Y. Romo  
Rocio Salazar

## UNDERGRADUATE MINORS

Christopher Ackerman  
Crystal Boyas  
Krystal E. Corcoles  
Issa M. Cruz  
Benny Hernandez  
Javier Huazano Padilla  
Cindy J. Martinez  
Alejandra C. Medina  
Alejandra Melesio  
Rachel Miller  
Jonathan Miranda  
Paola H. Montesino  
Crystal Moreno-Garcia  
Demisha J. Ramirez  
Stephanie Ramos  
Eder Rebollar Vergara  
Kamelia S. Roman  
Daisy Silva  
Marely Soto  
Rossy I. Tejada  
Ricardo Zapata

## GRADUATE MINORS

**Adrian Bello Uriarte** Ph.D., Spanish Linguistics  
*Dissertation: Effects of Instruction on Writing Improvement of University Heritage Learners of Spanish: A Longitudinal Study (Faculty Advisor: Prof. Melissa Bowles)*

**José G. Izaguirre III** Ph.D., Communication  
*Dissertation: Becoming La Raza: Chican@ Counterpublicity and Rhetorics of the Viet Nam War (Faculty Advisor: Prof. Josue David Cisneros)*

**Diana Leon-Boys** Ph.D., Communications and Media  
*Dissertation: Bienvenida a Disney Princesa Elena: Exploring Race, Age, and Gender in Disney's Elena of Avalor (Faculty Advisor: Prof. Angharad N. Valdivia)*

**Liliana Lule** M.A., Latin American & Caribbean Studies  
*Master's Thesis: Migrant Spaciality: Mexican-American Migratory Movements and the Diaspora (Faculty Advisor: Prof. Gilberto Rosas)*

**Ethan Madarieta** Ph.D., Comparative Literature  
*Dissertation: The Practice of Memory: Decolonial Resistance in Indigenous Chile and the Chilean Diaspora (Faculty Advisor: Prof. Brett Ashley Kaplan)*

**Juan Suárez Ontaneda** Ph.D., Latin American Literatures & Cultures  
*Dissertation: Staging Race: Blackness, Performance and Citizenship in Afro-Latin American Writers (1940-2000) (Faculty Advisor: Prof. Mariselle Meléndez)*

**Julie Torres** Ph.D., Anthropology  
*Dissertation: In Times of "Crisis": Puerto Rican Activism, Gender, and Belonging in Orlando (Faculty Advisor: Prof. Alejandro Lugo)*