



Department of

LATINA/LATINO STUDIES

LLS Spring Colloquium

“The Struggle for Food Assistance in the Mexican-Origin Community”

Wednesday, April 21

3:30-5:00pm

Dr. Janett Barragán Miranda

Postdoctoral Fellow for Academic Diversity, American University

During the post-WWII era the façade of a prominent middle class often overshadowed the constant presence of poverty and hunger throughout the nation. Still, throughout the decade of the 1960s the issue of hunger was being exposed in reports, films, books, and newspaper articles, making it impossible for the public and policymakers alike to look away from the seriousness of hunger. To counter the problem of hunger, governmental initiatives were implemented across the country, including the Food Stamps Program which by the late 1960s had the highest budget and number of participants. These initiatives, however, were not without their shortcomings which stemmed from unclear eligibility rules, a mistrust in welfare institutions, as well as stereotypes of people on public assistance. This study follows the community of Mexican origin as they navigated the exposé of hunger and created solutions to counter the shortcomings of governmental food assistance initiatives, namely the Food Stamps Program. By utilizing archival repositories in innovative ways to account for the dearth of sources about the community of Mexican origin, this research talk rethinks the archive to examine the responses from the community. At the center of this study are the people who advocated for themselves by creating their own grassroots food assistance programs, suing the United States Department of Agriculture, and taking to the streets to march for equal access to food assistance, ultimately proved that it was a civil right to not be hungry.

Janett Barragán Miranda is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow for Academic Diversity at American University in Washington D.C. There she serves as a member of the university-wide initiative for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Barragán Miranda completed her M.A. and Ph.D. in Chicana and Chicano Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is currently working on her book manuscript titled, *Hungering for Equality*, a monograph about the Mexican origin community's struggle for food justice in the 1960s. As a first-generation college student and the daughter of Mexican immigrants, Barragán Miranda is committed to mentorship and community building. She is currently member of the Latina and Latino Affinity Group and a mentor in the Latina/o Mentorship Program at American University.

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