



La Compañera

Latin American Studies Program Newsletter
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This year's Foro was held in Boliou and the Athenaeum, addressing political transitions in Venezuela.



2013 Foro Latinoamericano

Less than two months after the death of Hugo Chávez roiled Venezuela, three leading experts on the nation and its society converged in Northfield. Miguel Tinker Salas, a historian at Pomona College, Sujatha Fernandez, a sociologist at the City University of New York, and Javier Corrales, a political scientist at Amherst College, came to Carleton for the annual Foro Latinoamericano, the capstone forum of the Latin American Studies concentration.

According to political science and Latin American Studies professor Al Montero, who co-organized the Foro with Latin American Studies professor Silvia López, the timely theme of this year's Foro was pure luck – almost.

When planning began in December of 2011, he explained, “It was obvious to us that Chávez’s illness, which was known at the time even though his death wasn’t imminent then, was going to change the role he played in Venezuelan politics, so we decided to do something on Venezuela.”

According to Montero, the pair sought to recruit speakers with expertise on different facets of Venezuelan society, specifically its recent history, its people, and its policymaking.

“We were very happy with the diversity,” Montero said. “If you had three political scientists or three historians, you wouldn’t have gotten that diversity.”

The historian came first. Tinker Salas addressed an almost-full Boliou theater on Friday afternoon, a familiar circumstance for the Californian. His demand as a Venezuelan expert amongst news outlets has reached such levels that Pomona recently constructed a television studio for his personal use.

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*Chance to win prize. See pg. 7!



Recap of Foro *continued...*

Salas sought to deconstruct the commonly held conception that Chávez's election marked an authoritarian reversal in Venezuelan history. Venezuela's government had only been dubiously democratic before Chávez's election, he said, and the damage done by Chávez to Venezuelan democracy was overstated in the media.

Instead, he argued that "petro-politics" – oil – presented a better lens through which to trace the arc of Venezuelan history. Venezuela, which in light of new technology, has recently surpassed Saudi Arabia as the nation with most petroleum reserves in the world, has traditionally used the proceeds from oil exports to fund government, whether "government" signifies the pockets of corrupt leaders as it did in the mid-20th century, or the bloated socialist welfare state of Chávez. Culturally, the lavish lifestyle funded by oil receipts gave rise to modern-looking cities and a consumerist culture.

He was followed on Saturday morning by Fernandez, who, unlike Salas and Corrales, focused upon the role of the "person in the street" in shaping Venezuelan history. She played several samples from shortwave community radio stations, then discussed how ordinary Venezuelans use the cheap, easy-to-establish stations to broadcast their ideas on Venezuelan politics and, more broadly, what it means to be Venezuelan. Such media, she argued, give average citizens a chance to affect the outcome of the political turmoil engulfing the nation after Chávez's death.

Corrales, who gave the final lecture, spoke about Venezuelan foreign policy. Using a series of international relations theories, he traced Venezuela's attempts to use oil to define its relations with other nations through alliances in South America. The failure of these attempts, he concluded, had forced it to take a final path: that of a "rogue state" in the tradition of Iran and North Korea. As a consequence, Venezuela and the US, who is Venezuela's largest trading partner, share a relationship that Corrales memorably characterized as one between "best frenemies."

Audience members had an opportunity to witness the sought-after differences among the speakers play out when Tinker Salas vigorously cross-examined Corrales about his use of political science theories in the presentation. Corrales deftly parried by explaining that it was Venezuelan policymakers, not him, who had first used the theories.

Students generally reacted quite positively to the presentation. "The three speakers shared some insights but disagreed about others," said Latin American Studies concentrator Emily Lamberty '14, "This complexity has come to define my experience as a Latin American Studies concentrator in a good way, so the Foro effectively put my study of Latin America into perspective.

**Samir Rachid
'14:**

"As a student in Silvia López's Foro class, and as a Venezuelan having lived through Chávez, these talks and lectures gave me a more profound understanding of my country's politics and provided the information and discussions for a more objective lens that is able to grasp the nuances of the complex nature of the effects of petro-politics."

Written by: J.M. Hanley

This article was originally in the May 3, 2013 issue of the Carletonian and was reproduced with the author's permission.

I had just gotten back from studying abroad with Augsburg's Center for Global Education in Mexico and El Salvador. I had just fallen in love with Latin America and my religion courses on indigenous spiritualities, and was feeling especially passionate about speaking Spanish. In thinking about the summer, the idea of practicing Spanish and doing some serious backpacking seemed like a dream, but I wasn't sure how to make that happen. I contacted some friends at Where There Be Dragons (a youth travel organization that I had been abroad with earlier) and spoke with the program director for Latin America. When I told him the kind of project I was interested in, he urged me to think about Peru. The more I researched the more amazing it sounded.



The project I dreamed up, "Links to the Land: Earth-Based Spiritualities, Sustainability, and Struggle in Peru," was a way for me to combine my interests in rugged backpacking, rural farming, indigenous religions, and Latin America. I spent six weeks backpacking around Peru, traveling to small villages from the Amazon to the Andes, sharing in their daily life and learning about their connection to the land. Along the way, I saw the most beautiful wilderness I've ever seen, was fortunate enough to participate in several offerings to Pachamama, hung out with a lot of alpaca, caught and healed a terrible stomach amoeba, and was able to connect with several wildly generous people that were hugely patient with me and helped me to better understand the powerful link between land and peoplehood in Peru: Favian Champi Apasa, a spiritual and community leader in Q'eros, and the Condori brothers, who showed me around Mount Ausungate and hosted me in their home.*

Reflections on Traveling in Latin America: by Chloe Zelkha '13 Larson International Fellowship in Peru

My most memorable experience was, after a back-breaking (but totally brilliant) seven-day trek through the Ausungate Mountains, I arrived in the town Pac'chanta where I was supposed to have a homestay, only to have those plans come tumbling down around me with no backup. Pablo Condori, my guide, offered to bring me to his house for the night (which later became a week), so we packed up again, hiked another few hours, and settled down to a big, hot meal of alpaca meat and potatoes. I was dead tired, and totally ready to crash, when Pablo, his two brothers, and their wives invited me downstairs to a party. I walked down into the smoky outdoor kitchen where the whole family was packed in, celebrating a little one's first haircut. They had me dress up in traditional clothes (the first step upon coming to any household, I later learned), and, after much song, chewing on coca leaves, drinking ceremonial glasses of coke, and laughing, I finally got the idea that I was supposed to make the first cut. We all exploded in raucous applause and danced the night away to the transistor radio on the wall.

***Please let me know if you're headed to Peru, as they are wonderful guides and would absolutely love to connect with other Carls.**

I owe my fellowship experience to the Larson Fellowship, which funds imaginative and experiential adventures abroad for Carleton students. The Larson is unique in that it funds adventures and experiences, not only research. For me, what was special was the freedom to explore a country, build relationships with people, and have experiences without an eye to what comes next, to what I'm producing, or to exactly what I'm bringing back. It is a total privilege to have the opportunity to travel in this way and I'm really grateful for it.



A Narrative of the Vagabond: Latin American Studies Comps Talk on Street Performance in Lima



On May 7 in the Library Athenaeum, Latin American Studies major Zach Baquet '13 gave his senior comprehensive exercise talk about his research on street performance in Lima, Peru. Zach's initial interest sprang from his own experiences as a street performer in his hometown of New Orleans. In the past few years at Carleton, he studied his

topic through a study abroad experience in Lima, Peru and a field research experience in Quito, Ecuador. His work culminated through a paper on the topic as well as a short film of various street performers, designed to give them a voice.

His initial research in Quito led him to find out that there was a lot of discrimination against street performers because of their perceived role in the alternative force of urban space involving chaos and inconsistency. Zach pointed out in his speech, though, that this alternative force, though seeming to represent anarchical qualities, was not a negative force. In fact, a lot of the qualities that make it an alternative to the normal rigorous order of urban spaces is many times quite positive. For example, street performances can give a space a fluid and free form inspiring spontaneity and creativity.

Zach then gave a historical overview of how political and environmental changes shaped the city space. The various political responses to street performers have been hostile overall. The state government in Lima has sought to control the city's design so as to cultivate social order. This, however, has fostered social discrimination and prejudice against street performers as a whole to the point that stereotypes of the street performer as "hippie" or "crazy" have gained popularity.

Zach highlighted how street performance was extremely vital in converging the distance between a front-stage (a public identity) and a backstage (a personal, more private identity) for street performers. His title includes the name 'vagabond' instead of simply 'street performer' in order to speak to the idea that the artists are misunderstood and to emphasize the state's attitude that these artists cannot live within prescribed boundaries.

Alumna Profile:

Nora Ferm '02



Nora graduated from Carleton in June 2002 with a degree in Latin American Studies. She is originally from Bainbridge Island, Washington but now lives in Washington DC, working as a Climate Change Adaptation Specialist at the US Agency for International Development (USAID). She designs programs that will help vulnerable communities in developing countries to prepare for climate change impacts such as severe droughts and floods. Working at USAID entails a lot of time managing grants and contracts. The job also involves a lot of travel, including to places in Latin America, especially

Peru, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic. She is also part of the U.S. government delegation to the United Nations climate change negotiations.

At Carleton, Nora participated in the School for International Training's Comparative Ecology and Conservation program in Ecuador in 2000, right when Ecuador was getting rid of the sucre and adopting the US dollar.

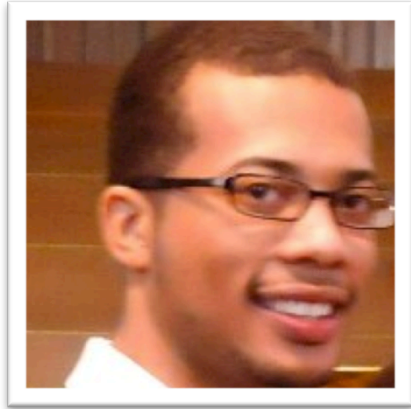
Majoring in Latin American Studies gave Nora a strong grounding in Spanish and Latin American history and politics, all of which help her today with designing projects. She has had to facilitate trainings in Spanish for Peruvian NGOs, meet with Colombian ministries and the meteorological service to understand their development priorities, and evaluate the likely effectiveness of proposed projects in several countries in order to make grant decisions.

The major also helped her get her first job after Carleton. She worked at the International Labor Rights Forum in Washington DC, and then was posted to Ecuador for a year and a half. When she applied, the organization was looking for someone with Spanish skills to help with translations and to help build relationships with NGOs and unions in Latin America. It was easier to make the transition to living and working in Ecuador having spent a semester there on the SIT study abroad program.

Nora recommended that current majors take advantage of opportunities to study and work abroad, during and soon after college. "Those experiences will help you get interesting jobs in fields like international development. Employers like USAID want to hire people who know how things really work on the ground in developing countries. Foreign language skills are also a big plus for a lot of employers. I have appreciated the opportunity to work on the ground and see results more directly, and also to engage more at the policy level."

Alumnus Profile:

Ray Nelson '12



Ray Nelson graduated from Carleton with a degree in Sociology/ Anthropology and Latin American Studies in June 2012. He is originally from Cleveland, Ohio but currently lives in Washington, DC, where he works at a civil rights law firm named Heller, Huron, Chertkof and Salzman PLLC that focuses on employment discrimination. He works as a legal assistant and his job is to assist attorneys in determining whether or not to represent potential clients in their discrimination claims against their employer. These involve situations about

discrimination based on race, gender, religion, disability and even age. He reflected: "It has certainly been an eye opening experience thus far."

In the case of the legal field, he has been a newcomer. His background in Latin American Studies helped develop his analytical abilities to make determinations about employment discrimination cases, which are multifaceted problems similar to the socio-political issues he studied as a Latin American Studies concentrator.

Ray's first time overseas was on a non-Carleton study abroad program in Buenos Aires, Argentina fall of sophomore year. This experience opened up his eyes to Latin America, but it also greatly improved his Spanish. He also stated that nearly all his classes with Professor Silvia López were extremely memorable because of the way she consistently pushed him as a student.

The capstone of Ray's Latin American Studies experience was the Brazilian Research Seminar taught by Professor Lopez and Professor Montero. At first he wondered what he was getting himself into, but overtime his two professors' passions grew on him. After learning about Brazilian politics and culture, he had the opportunity to travel with other Carleton students to Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and independently to Salvador. Because of the experience, his love for Brazil grew even more.

Ray recommended current majors, concentrators, and students of Latin American Studies take advantage of every opportunity. As someone who graduated only a year ago, he can say that he misses being able to engage about topics related to Latin America on a regular basis. This is especially true for classes that were entirely in Spanish. "It is critical that you challenge yourself and not be scared of a challenge, even if it is a difficult class, a challenging professor, or a daunting project idea. After your time at Carleton is over, you want to be in a position to reflect and acknowledge the lessons you learned and the skills you have gained. Yet the only way to do this is to challenge yourself in every way possible because therein lies true growth as a student, a scholar, and as a person."

Test your knowledge of Latin American heroes with this quiz.

***Submit your responses by e-mail to Andrew Fisher (afisher@carleton.edu)
The first person to submit all correct responses will receive a
Bon Appétit gift certificate.***

1. The Monument to the Army of the Andes in Mendoza, Argentina celebrates which famous South American liberator?
2. Name the French philosopher who disseminated Che Guevara's ideas about Revolution and was ultimately apprehended in Bolivia during Guevara's ill-fated campaign in that country.
3. Name the famous leftist president the same French philosopher interviewed in 1971 following his release by the Bolivian authorities.
4. Name the Latin American author who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982.
5. Name the most recent Latin American author to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.
6. Name the Colombian priest and pioneer of liberation theology who died as a guerrilla in 1966.
7. Name the sixteenth-century Mapuche who is celebrated for leading the resistance to the Spanish in Chile.
8. Name the Taino cacique born on the island of Hispaniola who is today celebrated for resisting the Spanish invasion of the island of Cuba.
9. Name the celebrated last leader of Brazil's most famous runaway slave community.
10. Name the woman who rescued Simon Bolivar from an assassination attempt and was honored with a symbolic state burial in 2010.

New Course Offerings for Fall 2013

LTAM 270. Chile's September 11th: History and Memory since the Coup September 11, 2013 marks the fortieth anniversary of the coup d'état that deposed the democratically elected government of socialist Salvador Allende and initiated the seventeen-year dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. This course explores the Allende years, the domestic and international contexts of the coup, the dictatorship's "counterinsurgency" and neoliberal reform programs, protest movements against military rule, and the ongoing struggles over human rights, popular mobilization, and collective memory. *6 credits, ND, WR; HI, WR2, IS —A. Fisher*

POSC 322. Neoliberalism & the New Left in Latin America This seminar will examine the "post-neoliberal" politics of Latin America, beginning with a reconsideration of the market-oriented turn in the region during the 1980s and 1990s. The seminar will focus on the rise of leftist governments as diverse as Hugo Chávez' Venezuela, Evo Morales' Bolivia, and Lula da Silva's Brazil. Other topics will include the emergence of anti-neoliberal movements, the wave of indigenous politics, environmental politics, and experiments with anti-poverty programs throughout Latin America. *6 credits, SI, IS—A. Montero*

SOAN 203. Anthropology of Good Intentions Today there are thousands of programs with sustainable development goals yet their effectiveness is often contested at the local level. This course explores the impacts of sustainable development, conservation, and AID programs to look beyond the good intentions of those that implement them. In doing so we hope to uncover common pitfalls behind good intentions and the need for sound social analysis that recognizes, examines, and evaluates the role of cultural complexity found in populations targeted by these programs. *6 credits, SI, IS—C. Ocampo-Raeder*

SPAN 222. Two Voices: Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Laura Restrepo Considered one of the greatest writers of the 20th century, Gabriel García Márquez defines magical realism. His works record the reality of his native Colombia, embedding it within the mythic patterns of Latin American cultures and histories. Like García Márquez, Laura Restrepo began her writing career as a journalist, but her lens remains firmly anchored in the reality of Colombia's encounters with political violence and drug cartels. In what she calls report style, Restrepo, too, tells the story of Colombia. The course focuses on selected works by these two authors, a study of contexts, themes, and styles. In translation. *6 credits, LA, IS—B. Boling*