

DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH & PORTUGUESE



SCHOOL OF LITERATURES, CULTURES, & LINGUISTICS

One hundred twenty-nine years of Spanish at the University of Illinois

By Mariselle Meléndez



In the midst of a pandemic, reflecting about the past offers us an opportunity to travel back in time and learn how academic institutions have subsisted throughout historical challenges and unexpected crises. As a head of the department, and also as a researcher of the distant past, I embarked on the fascinating task of digging into the history of my own department to learn about the many changes that my unit has gone through in its efforts to educate students, produce innovative research and teaching, and engage with the community. Spanish at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), has a one hundred twenty-nine-year history, which would be difficult to sum up here. However, I invite you to learn about its beginnings. You will see that in spite of all the historical changes that we have witnessed, a sustained commitment to foster creative knowledge to better educate our students and future leaders has been a trademark from its inception.

Our university began to offer Spanish courses in 1891 under what was known as the School of English and Modern Languages. Spanish was taught in alternate years taking turns with Italian. In 1893, Spanish became part of what was named that year the Department of the Romance Languages and Literature. The first course was offered by Rev. Misael Rama Paradis and it consisted of selected readings, composition, and conversational exercises. This marked the beginning of an increased interest in the study of Spanish at UIUC which extended to classes on “Grammar and Reading” as well as “Cervantes’ Don Quijote.” By 1908 the offerings extended to “Conversation and Composition,” “Advanced Readings and Compositions” which was taught with an emphasis on Spanish drama and poetry, and also a course on “Phonetics and Syntax.” Arthur R. Seymour who had a M.L. was listed as the instructor of record for the majority of these courses.

In 1908 as Spanish courses increased, the Centro Literario Español was created. The club was a type of tertulia composed of Latin American students and students from Argentina, Cuba, Italy, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the United States who met twice a month. The proceedings of the club were conducted in Spanish and it offered “a meeting ground for native and foreign students to exchange information concerning the commerce and literature of their respective countries.”¹ It is interesting to note the inclusiveness and interdisciplinary interests that characterized this group not only in terms of ethnicity but also in gender as the above photo shows.

Spanish remained as part of the Romance languages major and minor until 1919. Aside from the club Centro Literario Español, the focus on Latin America or courses on this area were practically absent in the first twenty years of the history of Spanish at UIUC. The Spanish

Greetings from the Head of the Department

Since our last newsletter in 2017, when I was in my second semester of assuming the role of head of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the world and ourselves have changed quite a bit. As I start my fifth year in this role, I am reminded of the many accomplishments that our faculty and students have achieved these past years in the areas of research, teaching, community outreach and academics, in general.

On March 12, 2020 when the University made the decision to shift in person classes to entirely online as a result of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, our academic world turned upside down. With little preparation faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and staff had to become creative in order to fulfill our responsibilities so students could continue with the rest of the academic year. Under very unprecedented circumstances every member of our department stepped up and enabled our students to continue with their education. The challenges continued when it was evident that due to the continuous spread of the pandemic, academic year 2020-2021 was to be one in which social distancing and remote learning were to become the new reality. Despite these difficult times our faculty, graduate teaching assistants and our new office manager Katie Walker, worked collectively and diligently to keep our department strong and to overcome all the obstacles that COVID-19 brought to our daily lives. Under hardly ideal circumstances they took on new professional challenges and managed to make things work. For all of that, as head of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, I am very grateful. Despite of all the challenges we are still facing, one of the best gifts we received this past academic year was the arrival of Katie Walker as our new office manager. We are indeed very lucky to have her guiding and helping us with the daily requests and paperwork that governs our academic lives. The positive attitude and kindness with which she approaches her job infuses contagious energy in all of us. And for that, we are very fortunate.

This newsletter, which was interrupted when the pandemic hit, serves as an opportunity to share with all of you the accomplishments of the past two years which extends to our almost 500 majors and minors. You will also learn about the 100 years of history of Spanish at UIUC. We are very proud of the contributions of our alumni in the areas of advancement. Thanks to their financial support, we are

Under very unprecedented circumstances every member of our department stepped up and enabled our students to continue with their education.



Mariselle Meléndez, Department Head

able to provide scholarships to our undergraduate and graduate students to better assist them in their academic pursuits. You will meet some of the recipients in the pages to follow. In this regard, I am delighted to announce that thanks to the support of our distinguished alumna Dr. Sandra Cypess (PhD 1976) and her husband, Dr. Raymond H. Cypess, we will be inaugurating a new lecture series known as the “Drs. Raymond H. and Sandra M. Cypess Spanish and Portuguese Endowed Speaker Fund.” Thanks to this endowment we will be able to bring top scholars working on the area of Latin American literature with emphasis on gender and women’s studies. We are most thankful for their support.

To conclude, I am very proud of our department’s contribution to the mission of our university when it comes to excellence in scholarship and innovation, commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, transformative learning, and societal impact. Thank you in advance for taking the time to learn more about us. In the meantime, stay well and safe until we beat this pandemic.

Until then,
Mariselle Meléndez, Department Head

continued from cover

program was basically in the hands of two main professors up to 1929 who were, Dr. Arthur R. Seymour and assistant professor John Driscoll Fitzgerald. In the case of Fitzgerald, he taught at UIUC from 1909 to 1929. He was a distinguished member of the Hispanic Society of America and a corresponding member of the Real Academia Española. Seymour was instrumental in the creation of Spanish courses with a heavy emphasis on business including “Spanish for Business” and “Business Correspondence and Conversation.” Materials analyzed in these courses ranged from facsimile business correspondence to consular and governmental documents written in Spanish. To these, Spanish graduate courses were added in 1917 which included “The Novela of the Golden Age” and “The Modern Novel in Spain.” Prof. Fitzgerald and Dr. Seymour were respectively in charge of those courses.

In 1919-1920, Spanish was recognized as a major requiring completion of 20 hours of Spanish in addition of Spanish elementary courses. As the program grew, and Dr. Seymour became Assistant Dean of Foreign Students, Spanish was taught by then associate professor Dr. John Van Horne, one instructor with a PhD and fourteen assistants, seven of them women. All fourteen assistants held AB, BS, and AM degrees. In fact, professor Van Horne — a twice awarded John Simon Guggenheim fellow — eventually became head of the department. It is after Spanish became a major when the first two Latin American courses focusing on Mexican culture and literatures were offered in 1929-1930; one on “El pensamiento y la cultura mexicana revelado en su literatura” and another one on “La novela en la literatura mexicana.” Both courses were taught by visiting Spanish professor and writer Julio Jiménez Rueda. Jiménez Rueda was a Mexican lawyer, playwright and diplomat who was also known for being the co-founder of the now famous Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana. This emphasis on the intersections between literature and culture would become, since then, a signature of what our department is known for today.

In 1939-1940, the dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences recommended that the Department of Romance Languages be reorganized into two departments, namely: (1) the Department of French, and (2) the Department of Spanish and Italian; each to have a separate head, staff and budget. Professor Van Horne was named head of the department and the departmental office was located in

Lincoln Hall. At that time the department already offered a minor with 20 required hours. In the 1940s, the number of Latin American courses increased including “Introduction to Spanish American Literature,” “Modern Spanish and Spanish American Drama,” “Survey of Latin American literatures,” “Orígenes de la cultura hispanoamericana,” and “Grandes escritores de la América hispana en los siglos XIX-XX.” At the time illustrious visiting professors came to the University of Illinois to teach, including famous Uruguayan scholar Enrique Rodríguez Fabregat and José Bagú. Enrique Rodríguez Fabregat, world renown journalist and politician, eventually became a diplomat at the United Nations playing a vital role along with Gabriela Mistral on the “Tabla de los Derechos de la Niñez” which became the foundational document for the creation of the UNICEF. Bagú was an internationally known Argentinean historian, philosopher and sociologist who is considered to date one of the most influential Marxist thinkers. While on campus he gave many talks on issues from post war problems in Pan America to student relations between the U.S. and South America. The courses on Latin America were also taught by Joseph S. Flores who was an assistant at the time. Flores taught for forty-one years in our department and in his honor the Joseph S. Flores award was established by his former students and colleagues at Illinois and across the nation to honor him for his achievements. Our department gives the award annually to an outstanding undergraduate majoring in Spanish. ▶



▶ Read the full article at:
<https://spanport.illinois.edu/alumni/alumni-news>

¹All citations come from the *Catalogue and Register, Report of committee on courses of study and faculty for the Illinois Industrial University*. Information from the 1970's to the 1980's was found at the University Archives in Orchard Street. I would like to give special thanks to my former RA, Liz-Moreno-Chuquen (PhD 2019) who assisted me with some of the archival research for this article. Yvette Bandin (University of Illinois) also worked as a RA for the last stage of the project. In addition, I would like to thank our librarian Dr. Antonio Sotomayor, Librarian of Latin American and Caribbean Studies who brought to my attention the existence of these photos. Finally, after the pandemic hit, Dr. William J. Maher, Director and Archivist at the University Archives kindly allowed me to complete the rest of my archival work. He also made possible for me to access documents pertaining to 1970's and 1980's. My deepest thanks to him for making this possible under very challenging circumstances.

Assistant Professors Advancing the Field

One of the ongoing strengths of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese is a commitment to diversity and inclusion, especially to excel in research and teaching as one of the top Spanish programs in the U.S. As a strategic priority, the department has actively focused on expanding its attention to heritage speakers, U.S. Latinx studies, and Greater Mexico.

As a department, we are known for our combination of expertise and outstanding support of faculty and students, with close mentoring, course offerings, and research. As part of this goal, the department has welcomed four new assistant professors in these areas that are advancing the field in both literature and culture, and Hispanic linguistics.

In fall 2018 the Department of Spanish and Portuguese welcomed two new assistant professors to its faculty, Drs. Xiomara Verenice Cervantes-Gómez and Carolyn Fornoff. These hires have greatly expanded the Department's expertise and course offerings in the culture of "Greater Mexico," a concept that also recognizes the importance of Mexico and Mexican culture within Central America and the United States.

Professor Cervantes-Gómez received her PhD from the University of Southern California and her research focuses on issues of gender, sexuality, and performance in contemporary Mexican and U.S. Latinx literary, artistic, cultural production. Through the lenses of queer theory and performance studies, Professor Cervantes-Gómez's work examines the way that performers have "used their bodies as a sort of protest as well as a claim of identity," particularly in ways that resist the "long history of machismo that impacts public policy, day to day life, and the environment." The relationships between performance and activism are also an integral part of Prof. Cervantes-Gómez's course offerings.



Professor Fornoff received her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania and is particularly interested in eco-criticism, a theoretical intervention that foregrounds the environment in the ways we think and understand culture and society. She is particularly interested in the ways that authors and artists explore the intersection of environmental and social justice in their work. In discussing the importance of her approach, Professor Fornoff pointed out that "most of the environmental activists that are murdered in Mexico and Central America are indigenous and women." Taking social and environmental justice as inherently linked is key to understanding our current moment and to imagining different or better futures.



Professors Cervantes-Gómez and Fornoff are incorporating their knowledge of Mexican culture in their course offerings. Recently, Professor Cervantes-Gómez taught

a course on “From Divas to Deviants” about the role and performance of women in Latinx popular culture that has shaped contemporary understandings of womanhood. Professor Fornoff’s class, “Mexican Cinema,” invites students to think critically about how Mexican history and identity has been represented on the silver screen, from the very beginning of silent cinema until today.

In fall 2020, the department excitedly welcomed two more new assistant professors in the area of Spanish in the United States: Drs. Salvatore Callesano and Rodrigo Delgado. Their addition to the Spanish linguistics faculty further broadens and strengthens the strategic directions of the department’s curriculum and research in these areas.



Professor Callesano holds a PhD in Hispanic linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin. His research attends to sociolinguistic production and perception in bilingual U.S. Latinx regions and his dissertation simultaneously addresses the mediatization of language and perceptual dialectology in Miami. Broadly, he investigates how language(s) and communities affect one another in linguistic and sociocultural domains.

Professor Delgado received his PhD in Hispanic linguistics from the University of Illinois at Chicago. His research interests include bilingualism, code-switching (English and Spanish), and syntax. More broadly, he has focused



on methodological issues regarding bilingual participants, including attitudes toward Chicago English-Spanish code-switching. His current work focuses on gender assignment in Spanish/English with heritage speakers of Spanish in Chicago.

This year, Professors Callesano and Delgado taught courses on “Spanish in the U.S.” and “Bilingualism,” each emphasizing how language moves across cultural landscapes. They combined new media with cultural studies to approach linguistic categories that their students were able to think critically about what Spanish in the U.S. means. When asked what “Spanish in the U.S.” means, Professor Callesano emphasized, “It’s about language experience. It is not uniquely about structure; it is about structure and experience.” For Professor Delgado, this answer rightfully speaks to his own approach, as he explains, “I think of my life of Spanish in the U.S. I’m a heritage speaker, I moved to the U.S. from Mexico when I was 11.” He continued, “It’s about learning that Spanglish is not a bad thing.” Both Professors Callesano and Delgado underscore the importance of unlearning preconceived notions about Spanish, by thinking more attentively about history and context.

The department could not be more excited to see what else these new faculty members will add to our students’ experiences and to the scholarly community at UIUC.



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Portuguese News

Last spring (2018), Illinois hosted the sixth annual **Portuguese Language Connection**, an award-winning educational and cultural event co-organized between UIUC, the University of Chicago, and Northwestern University. The event organized saw over 120 participants enjoy a full day of activities organized around the theme “Agricultural Production in Brazil.” Students had the opportunity to learn how to prepare classic Brazilian foods, to listen to presentations from various food and agricultural companies about food supply in Brazil, and to meet other Portuguese students from top Illinois institutions. In 2019, many Illinois students traveled to the University of Chicago to participate in the seventh Language Connection, organized around the theme of Capoeira, the Afro-Brazilian martial art.

Also in 2019, professor John Karam received a Fulbright scholarship to collaborate with professor Antônio Carlos Lessa at the Universidade de Brasília. During his time in the capital, he conducted research in the archives of the Brazilian foreign ministry and the Brazilian congress as well as with the local Arab community as part of his current book project. He also conducted meetings for the Brazil Lemann Leadership Program that brings Brazilian public servants to study at the University of Illinois.



Sixth Annual Portuguese Language Connection

Jessica Romero (Portuguese and Spanish, '18) sent us the following dispatch from her Fulbright post in central Brazil:

I am currently completing my Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) grant in Morrinhos, Goiás, Brazil. My time at UIUC prepared me to take on this role as an English teaching assistant. I spent three

years studying Portuguese and learning about Brazilian culture at UIUC and when I found out that I received my Fulbright, I was thrilled to know that I would be returning to Brazil.

I started teaching basic English classes in the evenings to the local community here in Morrinhos, and I have paired a few of my Brazilian students with a few of my

friends back home as conversation partners to practice their English. I am also assisting a teacher with her English class preparing weekly activities to engage her students who will one day be English teachers in Brazil. As a side project, I am volunteering at a local high school where I will be working with the physical education teacher coaching a girls' soccer team.

Next week, the students and the ETAs will be making tacos, and we will be selling them on campus to help fundraise for their Halloween party in October. As a Mexican-American, I am very pleased to show my Brazilian students and friends a little about my culture.

Jessica Romero (pictured center) with students in Morrinhos, Brazil



UNDERGRADUATE ALUMNI

The Impact of Majoring in Spanish

Oscar Nájera (BA, '14, Spanish) is a high school Spanish teacher at Walter Payton College Prep, the top-ranked public high school in Illinois.

Oscar was inspired to become a Spanish teacher after a study abroad semester in Granada. He says "It was an eye-opening experience that changed my life. I loved being immersed in the Spanish language, in a new culture, and discovering a new city." Oscar started working in Antioch, Illinois, but had an opportunity to work at Payton which was facilitated by former Illinois classmate and current Payton Spanish teacher, Jacqueline Sulisz. Payton was the perfect fit for Oscar as a diverse school that places importance on social justice. While Payton's students are highly gifted, the way he teaches Spanish has not changed as Payton students still need his supportive and caring approach. With his students being from a diverse city environment, they understand the importance of being multilingual. They also love analyzing film, art, and literature. They are passionate, intelligent, and amazing to work with: they push Oscar to be better.

Oscar had amazing experiences at Illinois. "I had great professors who shared their passion with me. I related to professor Montrul's Bilingualism class. I felt represented in classroom discussions, readings, and lectures: it was the start of my Latinx identity exploration. Thereafter, I took courses that focused on Latin American culture such as professor Ledesma's course on Latin American cinema." He also has fond memories of courses "taught by faculty like professors Bowles and Foote, who used the latest research in second language acquisition, and really prepared me for my teaching positions." Oscar also fondly recalls student teaching at Central High School in Champaign.

The most fun about being a teacher is being around students. "Building rapport is something that is extremely important. The most rewarding part of teaching is hearing them use Spanish in authentic settings. We have done field trips where students are expected to use Spanish around the city. I have also traveled with students to Spain and Ecuador. I am extremely proud when my students are able to communicate with native speakers."

Oscar is completing his master's degree during the summers in Guanajuato, Mexico. Learning about Mexican culture has led to a closer connection to his family and roots. Oscar's future will keep getting brighter!



Zhesu (Selina) Zhu was an international undergraduate student who graduated with a double major in Anthropology and Spanish in 2019.

What makes Selina such an interesting student is that she is one of the few students who started Spanish in the very first course offered here (Spanish 122 at the time) and successfully transitioned into the major courses which start at Spanish 200. In her last semester (Spring 2019), she completed research for Dr. Melissa Bowles, one of our Spanish linguistics faculty. So how did she accomplish so much having started with Spanish from the very beginning?

It should be noted that Spanish is not the first foreign language Selina has mastered. She attended the Shanghai Foreign Language School, where the focus was studying English. During that time, she also had an interest in Korean and began studies in that language. Once she came to the University of Illinois, she began to taking Spanish. She credits her very first teaching assistant from SPAN 122 who encouraged her to stick with the course even though Selina thought it was very hard. Selina acknowledged that her experience learning Spanish at UIUC was different from her other experiences in that at UIUC her Spanish classes were all taught in Spanish. This, she said, was harder at first but much better in the end.

This positive experience and encouragement made her interest in Spanish grow and so she decided to keep going with it. Selina decided that she was going to take advantage of the academic year in Barcelona that is offered by the Spanish Department. She thought it would be a great opportunity to not only finish her coursework for her major, but also to strengthen her Spanish skills. Selina stated that upon arrival in Barcelona she felt well prepared for her new academic and life circumstances. She pointed out, for example, Spanish 228 (composition) was a crucial bridge course that allowed her to successfully meet the academic writing demands she faced in Barcelona. She added that the whole-year program in Barcelona offered her the best opportunity for a more complete cultural and linguistic immersion experience.

Selina is proud that she was able to finish a major in Spanish and wants others like her to know that is it possible to start at the beginning and still complete a Major in Spanish at UIUC. She wants international students like herself to consider the significance of a major in Spanish from UIUC. In China, for instance, demands for Spanish language skills are on the rise due to China's increasing interaction with the Hispanic world.

Selina just completed a MA degree in Hispanic linguistics at Georgetown University.



GRADUATE ALUMNI

Meet Our Distinguished Writers



María Auxiliadora Álvarez

María Auxiliadora Álvarez, is a professor at Miami University, Ohio, and obtained master's and doctoral degrees from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese (1997-2002). She has published books of essays including *"Experiencia y expresión de lo inefable. La poesía de San Juan de la Cruz" (2013)*; *"Fino animal de sombra. De la antigua mística a la escritura urbana" (2017)*, and books of poetry, such as *"Inmóvil/Un día más de lo invisible" (2019)*; *"Cuerpo & Ca(z)a" (7th Edition, 2019)*; *"El silencio El lugar" (2018)*; *"El amor de los enfermos-Compendium of Ca(z)a, Páramo solo and Las regiones del frío" (2018)*; and *"Piedra en :U: (2016)*"; and others back to 1978.

Impact of a Spanish PhD in Spanish in her career

I remain profoundly grateful to the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Michael Palencia-Roth directed my doctoral dissertation and defined my direction in teaching and research in colonial studies. Thanks to him, I created a related curriculum 15 years ago which I still teach. Linde M. Brocato is the fruitful seed of the visit every semester by my students to the King Library of Miami University. Creative and generous, Linde has also translated a great part of my poetic work into English. Anna María Escobar and Joyce Tolliver provided multifaceted academic, fraternal, and moral support. Paul W. Borgeson Jr. left an indelible memory in sharing the last poems of his life. On that cold evening of 1999, we brought red roses to him, and read our poems by candle-light in nine different languages. In honor of that deeply moving reading in the Lucy Ellis Lounge, I continue to organize recitals for students at Miami University — and I never forget to bring flowers.

All of the professors named, plus Ronald Souza and Peggy Sharpe, wrote letters of recommendation in 2001 when the U.S. government awarded my family with U.S. citizenship due

to my achievements in poetry. Even though I wrote poetry before UIUC, there I acquired the practice of systematizing the production of written work. UIUC brought me out of the nets of the poem (susceptible by definition to solipsism) into richer world: work written for others. I could thank, in the form of essays, articles or reviews, those authors who had been my source of vital sustenance. This knowledge was what I was looking for in my mid-30s when I came with my kids from Caracas, Venezuela, to the U.S. for graduate studies. It is to UIUC that I owe the pride that all of my children are dedicated to education: Laura (BA, '02, international relations; JD, '05 UIUC) is an assistant dean for international and graduate affairs at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law; Diana (BA, '04 business administration-marketing, UIUC) leads her company's efforts in energy efficiency with all the K-12 public schools and higher education entities in Illinois; and Andrés (BA, '06, political science, UIUC; MA, '07, international relations, Miami University of Ohio) is an associate dean of students at Brown University.

I am deeply thankful to Michael Palencia-Roth, Linde M. Brocato, Anna María Escobar, Joyce Tolliver, Paul W. Borgeson Jr., Ronald Souza, Peggy Sharpe, John Wilcox, José Ignacio Hualde, Rossie Hernández, Luisa Elena Delgado, Bill Van Patten, Julie Dussias, Melanie Waters, Kathy Schilson, Marita Romine, Lynn Stanke, Geraldine Moore, and others. Their "unending gift will live and grow, like music, and will remain with me to the end." (Jorge Luis Borges)

Dr. Alain Lawo-Sukam is an associate professor of Hispanic and Africana studies at Texas A&M University. He holds a PhD in Spanish from the University of Illinois and is the author of *"La poesía de Guinea Ecuatorial en su contexto colonial y (trans)nacional" (2019)*, *"Hacia una poética afro-colombiana: el caso del Pacífico" (2010)*, the novel *"Mange-Mil y sus historias de tierra caliente" (2017)*, and the poetry book *"Sueño con África. Dream of Africa. Rêve d'Afrique" (2013)*. He has published numerous articles, serves on several editorial boards, and has received numerous grants and awards in teaching and research. He was elected for five years to the executive committee of the Modern Language Association.

Impact of a Spanish PhD in Spanish in his career

UIUC has prepared me as a researcher, teacher, and writer. The courses, workshop grants, and conference travel awards gave me the foundation to become a scholar. My peer-reviewed articles and books are in a way the result of the theoretical and practical knowledge provided by my professors. My passion for research came unexpectedly in graduate school when I received a \$100 prize for the

Outstanding Student Paper at the Midwest Association for Latin American Studies Conference. That inspired me to transform my term papers into conference presentations and/or articles. I always encourage my graduate students to follow those same steps.

The interdisciplinary nature of the department opened the door to explore other disciplines. My experience with anthropology, philosophy, and English studies, among others, has allowed me to forge a deep understanding of African diaspora studies. This interdisciplinary training was one of the main factors of my recruitment at Texas A&M University.

At UIUC I worked with an incredible caring and rigorous advisor and chair of my dissertation committee. Professor Michael Palencia-Roth's advice was instrumental in the publication of my first research book in 2013 and achieving tenure and promotion. I use my experience with the professor to guide my graduate students.

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese also set the foundation for my teaching. The courses on teaching techniques and methodologies as well as workshops provided me with tools to become a better teacher. I credit



Dr. Alain Lawo-Sukam

the numerous teaching awards received as graduate student and in my professional career to UIUC. I am also grateful to the department for granting me a teaching assistantship during my years as graduate student. For a foreigner and non-native Spanish speaker, the assistantship helped me to become an effective Spanish instructor for students who aspire to teach Spanish.

I was fortunate to arrive in the department when the Paul Borgeson, Jr. Poetry Recital was effective. Over the years, the feedback and discussions with the audience, professors, writers, and classmates motivated me to polish and publish my writings. I learned in the department how to be a writer

without jeopardizing my education and teaching. Some of my creative writings were drafted when I was still in school. Creative writing is now part of my professional life. Ironically, my poetry and novel give me more national and international visibility than my research. I hope that one day my alma mater could use those books in classrooms.

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese nurtured and developed me to become an effective scholar, teacher, writer, and, above all, a better citizen of the USA and the world.

MA and PhD Awarded Degrees | 2018-2020

MA — 2018

Ander Beristain Murillo
Leslie Del Carpio
Paola Enríquez Duque
Keren Garcia
Irati Hurtado Ruiz
Kelsey Rademacher
Katie VanDyne
Ennio Nuila
Aritz Regoyo
Bethanny Sudibyo

MA — 2019

Amaia Álvarez Tamayo
Lucía Sánchez
Alicia Brown

MA — 2020

Jeferson Barboza Torres
Paul Haker
Danil Massip
Jude Krushnowski

PhD — 2018

Emily DiFilippo
Assistant professor,
Loras College

PhD — 2019

Sara Fernández-Cuenca
Assistant professor,
Wake Forest University

Liz Moreno-Chuquen
Assistant professor,
Idaho State University

Begoña Arechabaleta

Lecturer, Department
of Romance Languages
and Literatures, University
of Chicago

Adrian Bello Uriarte

Lecturer, Butler University

Samantha Good

Spanish Instructor, Nashoba
High School, Boston, MA

PhD — 2020

Juan Suárez Ontaneda
Assistant professor,
Department of Classics and
Foreign Languages,
Xavier University

Cristina Mostacero Pinilla

Assistant professor,
Department of Modern Foreign
Languages, Dominican University

Ane Icardo Isasa

Assistant professor,
Department of Modern and
Classical Languages and
Literatures at California State
University, Northridge

Mónica Lugo

Spanish instructor,
Eastern Illinois University

Teresa Greppi

Spanish faculty, Languages
Department, The Peddie School
in Hightstown, NJ

Honors and Awards

FALL 2018-2020



UNDERGRADUATE

Stephanie Abello

2019 Joseph S. Flores Award

Emily Boehm

2019 Sarah Menoni Scholarship

Emily Brown

2019 Bonnie S. Jugenheimer Scholarship

Mia Carris

2020 Bonnie S. Jugenheimer Scholarship

Meghan Dziki

2019 Anthony M. Pasquariello Award

Teresa Hill

2018 Paul W. Borgeson Study Abroad Scholarship

Taylor Kassis

2020 Sarah Menoni Scholarship

Hildegard Luitjen

2019 Paul W. Borgeson Study Abroad Scholarship

Angela Medrano

2020 Joseph S. Flores Award

Vanessa Montalvo

2018 Bonnie S. Jugenheimer Scholarship;
2018 Sarah Menoni Scholarship

Mimi Quinn

2020 "Highest Distinction" for her undergraduate thesis entitled, "Un análisis afectivo: Una investigación comparativa del comportamiento de dos clandestinos africanos."

Madeline Rodríguez

2018 Joseph S. Flores Award

Jessica Romero

2018 Fulbright Fellowship for flagship international educational exchange program in Brazil

Isabella Russell

2020 "Highest Distinction" for her undergraduate thesis entitled, "El bilingüismo y la afasia: Los efectos en el lenguaje y la recuperación."

Kaylee Tucker

2018 Álvaro Monserrat Llardén Scholarship in Catalan Studies

GRADUATE

Lorena Fabiana Alarcón

Received the CLACS Travel Research Grant for research project "Identity and Language in Andean Spanish in Jujuy, Argentina"

Maria Arruti Iparraguirre

2020 Timothy J Rogers Memorial Summer Fellowship

Flávia Batista da Silva

Lemann Graduate Fellowship for AY 20-21; CLACS Travel Research Grant for research project "Righting Foreign Policy: Bolsonaro's Electoral Campaign in Brazil and the Venezuelan Crisis"

Laura Cummings

Spring 2020 and 2018 Graduate College Conference Travel Grant

Ander Beristain Murillo

2020 Timothy J Rogers Memorial Summer Fellowship

Brunna Bozzi Feijo

2019 Best paper Award for her paper "An Archive of Political Disappearance under Military Rule in Brazil"; 2019-2020 Lemann Graduate Fellowship

Emily DiFilippo

2018-2019 Andrew W. Mellon Pre-Doctoral Fellow in Environmental Humanities (IPRH)

Eider Etxebarria-Zuluaga

AY 20-21 Darlene Wolf Fellowship

Sara Fernández Cuenca

2018 Best Paper Award for her paper "The processing of the subjunctive mood by Spanish native and non-native speakers: An eyetracking study"; 2018-2019 Darlene Wolf Scholarship

Fabiola Fernández Doig

CLACS Global South Languages Fellowship (2019-20)

Carmen Gallegos Pérez

Lemann Graduate Fellowship (2020-21); 2020 Best Paper Award for her paper, "Líderes indígenas en la prensa: retando la historia de la modernidad en la Amazonía Peruana"

Megan Gargiulo

2020 IPRH Prize for Best Graduate Student Research Paper; 2019-2020 Marianne A. Ferber Graduate Scholarship in Gender and Women's Studies; Spring 2019 and 2018 Graduate College Conference Travel Grant

Samantha Good

2018-2019 Andrew W. Mellon Pre-Doctoral Fellow in Environmental Humanities (IPRH)

Teresa Greppi

2020 Campus Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award; 2020 LAS Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching by Graduate Teaching Assistants

Iratí Hurtado Ruiz

2019 Best Paper Research Award for her essay, "Spanish Dative Clitics: A Structural Priming Study"

Ane Icardo

2020 Illinois Student Government Teaching Excellence Award; Fall 2018 Graduate College Conference Travel Grant



Cristina Mostacero

2020 LAS Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching by Graduate Teaching Assistants; 2018 Graduate College Conference Travel Grant; 2019-2020 Darlene Wolf Fellowship

Liz Moreno-Chuquen – 2019 Best Paper

Research Award for her article “Visualizing Afro-Cultural Identities in Contemporary Argentina”; 2018-2019 SLCL Dissertation Completion

Dawn Navejas

2019 Best Paper Research Award for her paper “Minority Language Development in a TWA Program: A Case Study of Teachers’ Beliefs and Practices”

Amanda Rector

2019-2020 SLCL Dissertation Completion; Spring 2018 Graduate College Conference Travel Award; 2018-2019 Lemann Graduate Fellowship

Juan Suárez Ontaneda

2019-2020 Lemann Graduate Fellowship; IPRH Graduate Student Fellowship for 2018-19

Almike Vazquez-Lozare

2020 Best Paper Research Award for her essay, “Referential Null Objects in Basque Spanish”; Fall 2019 Graduate College Conference Travel Award

Jone Vicente Urrutia

SLCL Dissertation Completion Fellowship (AY 2020-21); Fall 2019 Graduate College Conference Travel Award; 2018 Best Paper Award for her paper “La ‘mujer Ford’: la modernidad no deseada en La Venus mecánica (1929) de José Díaz Fernández”

FACULTY

Ann Abbott

2019 Community Impact Award

Melissa Bowles

Conrad Humanities Professorial Scholar Award (2018-2023); Presidential Initiative to Celebrate the Impact of the Arts and the Humanities competition, for her project “The Bilingual Advantage Starts at Home: Raising Awareness of the Benefits of Home Language Maintenance Among Illinois Teachers and Families”

Xiomara V. Cervantes-Gómez

2019 Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Mexico Section Best Dissertation Award; Criticism & Interpretive Theory Junior Research Fellowship (2019-2021); 2019 LEAP Award (Lincoln Excellence for Assistant Professors)

L. Elena Delgado

University Scholar (2018-2019); 2020-21 University of Illinois President’s Executive Leadership Program (PELP) Fellow

Carolyn Fornoff

2019-2020 National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity — Faculty Success Program (NCFDD); 2019 Arnold O. Beckman Research Award from the Campus Research Board Award for her book project: “Subjunctive Aesthetics: Mexican Culture in the Era of Climate Change”; 2020 Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities Summer Faculty Research Fellowship

Raquel Goebel

2019 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation The Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) Partnership Grant

Florencia Henshaw

2019 LAS Academic Professional Award; 2020 ACTFL’s publication “The Language Educator” Editorial Advisory Board

Javier Irigoyen-García

2019 LAS Dean’s Distinguished Professorial Scholar

Jill Jegerski

Conrad Humanities Professorial Scholar (2020-25)

John T. Karam

Fulbright Scholar Award (2018-2019)

Eduardo Ledesma

2018 Campus Distinguished Promotion Award; 2019 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer stipend; IPRH Faculty Fellowship (2018-2019); LAS Helen Corley Petit Scholar 2018-2019; Conrad Humanities Professorial Scholar (2019-2024); Unit for Criticism & Interpretive Theory Senior Fellowship (2020-22); 2020 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for his project, “Visually Impaired Filmmakers and Technologies of Sight”

Pilar Martínez-Quiroga

2018 Hispania Outstanding Article by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese’s flagship research journal Hispania (“La detective Bruna Husky de Rosa Montero: Feminismo, distopía y conciencia cyborg”)

Mariselle Meléndez

2019-20 University of Illinois President’s Executive Leadership Program (PELP) Fellow

Silvina Montrul

2020 National Institute of Health, NICHD, for her project “Validating New Measures of Later Language Development with Spanish and English Monolinguals and Bilinguals”

Joyce Tolliver

2019 University of Illinois Outstanding Faculty Leadership Award

Melanie Waters

2020 LAS Academic Professional Award

Faculty News



Ann Abbott

Professor Abbott is currently writing a chapter titled “Community Service Learning Assessment: Reflections on Language, Community and Advocacy” for a volume titled “Integrating Context-based Approaches to Language Assessment in Multilingual Settings.” In collaboration

with LAS Honors, she is beginning a project to assess the needs of organizations that serve Latinx immigrants and are located outside of Champaign-Urbana, in rural communities.



Melissa Bowles

Professor Bowles’ research focuses on how classroom instruction impacts second and heritage language learners. Her current grant project, “The Bilingual Advantage Starts at Home” (co-PI, Kim Potowski, UIC) raises awareness of the lifelong cognitive, neurological,

and social benefits of bilingualism through outreach to K-12 students, teachers, school administrators and parents across Illinois.



Salvatore Callesano

Professor Callesano’s research is on language in U.S. Latinx communities. He is currently developing a corpus of Spanish in the U.S. as it is produced and perceived within communities on social media. This work, alongside a concurrent project on perceptual dialectology,

describes how mediatization on social media affects linguistic features (e.g. idioms) and, as such, how they become understood as sociolinguistic identity markers.

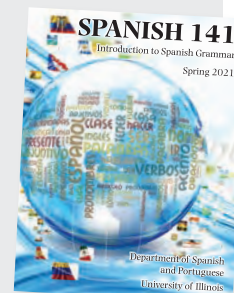


Brenden Carollo

As director of fourth semester Spanish, Carollo is happy to announce the completion of a curriculum development project in SPAN 141, Introduction to Spanish Grammar.

This project

was carried out with two goals in mind: the first to significantly reduce the cost of required materials for students and the second to provide even more relevant topics for students such as issues of social justice.



Xiomara V. Cervantes-Gómez

Dr. Cervantes-Gómez is currently completing her first book, “A Body Exposed: Risking the Aesthetics of Queer Mexicanness.” She has recently designed new courses for both undergraduate and graduate students on gender and sexuality, U.S. Latinx studies, and performance

studies. These classes continue to shape her research and service to students in the Department and across campus.



Elena Delgado

L. Elena Delgado is completing the first cultural history of modern literatures in Spain (Polity Press), co-authored with Jo Labanyi, and with the contributions of Helena Buffery, Kirsty Hooper and Mari Jose Olaziregi. The book showcases the country’s

cultural complexity, by working across its four major literary cultures — Castilian, Catalan, Galician and Basque. She is also co-editing (with E. Ledesma) the Routledge Companion to 20th and 21st century Spain.



Rodrigo Delgado

Professor Delgado's current work includes looking at examples of preposition stranding in the Spanish of heritage speakers. This is an interesting phenomenon because it is usually ungrammatical in monolingual Spanish. He also wants to look at preposition stranding

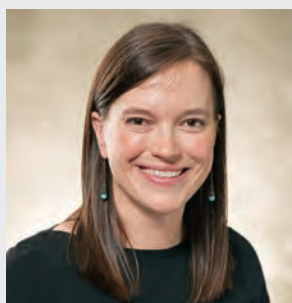
through English/Spanish code-switching. In this way, he is able to tease apart what grammatical feature licenses preposition stranding, which would otherwise be difficult using only monolingual data.



Raquel Goebel

Raquel has been working diligently to anticipate students' needs and bring excitement to Portuguese courses. In 2020, as an example of her commitment, she completed courses in on-line teaching, creating engaging materials, and oral communicative tasks at

Michigan State University. She was awarded a Mellon Grant to work with the universities of Chicago and Michigan State in the development of advanced courses for Portuguese.



Carolyn Fornoff

This winter, Carolyn Fornoff published "Timescales: Thinking Across Ecological Temporalities" with the University of Minnesota Press. This co-edited volume brings together scholars from the humanities, arts, and hard sciences to think together about how climate change has

transformed the way we think about time. It suggests that unwieldy problems like sea level rise require new forms of scholarly collaboration.



Florencia Henshaw

Dr. Florencia Henshaw has given 15 invited talks and workshops on online language instruction both nationally and internationally, and she created a website dedicated to technology for language teaching and learning: go.illinois.edu/TLTL. She was also elected to serve as the

university/college representative on the board of directors of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP).



Dara Goldman

Professor Goldman is currently completing a book on contemporary Cuban literature and culture. It examines how Cuban writers, musicians, filmmakers, and artists are thinking about those changes and what they mean for Cuban culture and society. As director of the

Program in Jewish Culture and Society, she has also been focusing on the diversity of Jewish communities in Latin America.



José Ignacio Hualde

Professor Hualde continues working on aspects of the synchronic and diachronic phonology of Spanish, Basque, and Catalan.

Faculty News *continued*



Javier Irigoyen García

Irigoyen García is currently working on a book project entitled “Dystopias of Infamy in Early Modern Spain,” which analyzes cultural anxieties about the limits of infamy in early modern Spain to show that the production of insults also haunts the imaginary of power.



Jill Jegerski

Professor Jegerski’s recent research includes a study of language processing among heritage speakers of Spanish using the visual world eyetracking paradigm and a chapter on psycholinguistic approaches in the Handbook of Spanish as a heritage language. This year she will

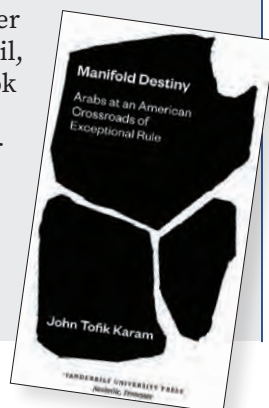
be teaching theories in second language acquisition to graduate students and introduction to Hispanic linguistics and courses on bilingualism to undergraduates.



John Karam

Professor Karam became director of the Lemann Center for Brazilian Studies. He also published “Manifold Destiny: Arabs at an American Crossroads of Exceptional Rule.” Through Arabs’ transnational accommodation at the border where Brazil,

Paraguay, and Argentina meet, the book brings together the authoritarian past and the counterterrorist present of our American hemispheric history of exceptional rule.



Eduardo Ledesma

Professor Ledesma is currently completing his second book “Cinemas of Marginality” on experimental Latin American film, and embarking on a new book project, “Blind Cinema,” that studies films made by blind and visually impaired directors. This project has been awarded an NEH summer

stipend, IPRH Fellowship, and more recently, a competitive year NEH fellowship. He also continues studying new media culture in Latin America and Spain.



Jonathan MacDonald

His research focuses on how humans represent the structures underlying the sentences that their mental grammar is able to produce. He is a theoretical syntactician who has been investigating a single morpheme “se” within the Romance language family for several years now and

continues to do so. Apparently small and simple, “se” is dense with syntactic and semantic complexity.



Pilar Martínez-Quiroga

She is currently working on a book project dealing with how female political activists connect feminist and nationalist demands in Spain. She examines the period since the political transition after Franco’s death (1975) through the present, focusing on Galicia, Catalonia, and the Basque Country.

**Mariselle Meléndez**

Meléndez's current book project, "Fluid Spaces and Transient Bodies: The Cultural and Racial Geography of Spanish American Ports in the Eighteenth Century" is in advanced contract with Vanderbilt University Press. This book examines how colonialism operated through

the particular site of the port as well as how race, gender and social relationships became part of a discursive envisioning of the port as a place to think, live, and survive.

**Silvina Montrul**

Prof. Montrul is currently working on a book under contract with Cambridge University Press ("Native Speakers, Interrupted"). She is co-editing two volumes: one is the "Cambridge Handbook of Heritage Languages and Linguistics" (Cambridge University Press), and the

other is on "The Acquisition of Differential Object Marking" (John Benjamins). She has an ongoing project on Spanish in Sweden and another one on bilingual school age children in the United States.

**Joyce Tolliver**

Professor Tolliver received the campuswide Outstanding Faculty Leadership Award, which recognizes shared governance leadership contributions in support of the excellence of the campus. She was elected 2018-2019 chair of the University Senates Conference, which serves as

faculty advisory board to President Killeen and the BOT, through the president. Since 2016, she has directed the Program for Translation Studies.

**Anna Torres Cacoullos**

Torres Cacoullos is a postdoctoral research fellow in Training in Digital Methods for Humanists (TDMH) with the Humanities Research Institute. Her current research on early Spanish cinema and film print culture seeks to capitalize on digital humanities methodologies in data

visualization and data mining as innovative tools for an emerging digital film forensics.

**Melanie Waters**

The LAS Awards Committee has chosen Melanie Waters as a recipient of the LAS Academic Professional Award. This award honors selected academic professionals (up to three) for their outstanding contributions to the college. Melanie joined the department in 1994 as assistant director

of the Spanish Basic Language Program and has served since 2008 as director of introductory Spanish.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

We announce the retirement of **Prof. Anna María Escobar** who after thirty-one years retired last December 2020 from the University of Illinois. She will remain as a Professor Emerita.



We welcome our new Spanish Academic Advisor, **Brady Hughes**. Brady graduated from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with a BA in Spanish and Global Studies. As an undergraduate research assistant, he studied youth activism and issues

relating to race and diversity in higher education. As an advisor, he is committed to working with students from diverse backgrounds and empowering them to succeed.



DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH & PORTUGUESE
SCHOOL OF LITERATURES, CULTURES, & LINGUISTICS
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Investing in foreign language teachers

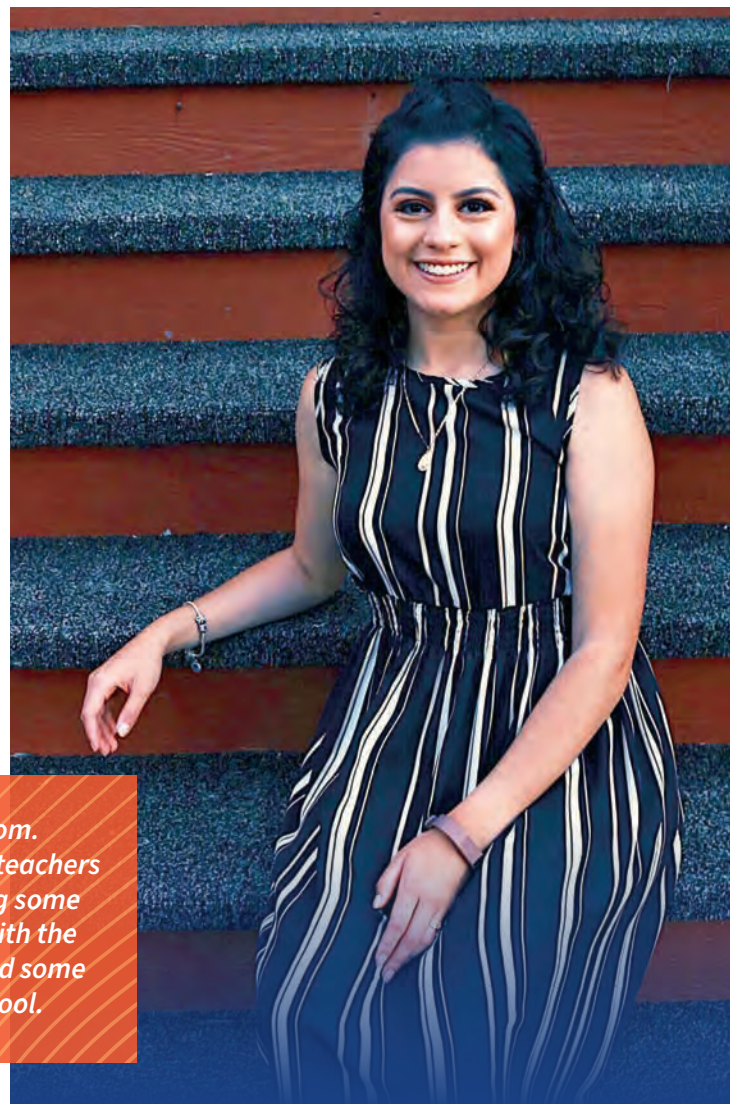
Did you know that there is a serious teacher shortage in Illinois, especially of foreign language teachers? With your support, we are helping meet the critical need for Spanish language teachers in Illinois and beyond.

Vanessa Montalvo, for example, received the Bonnie S. Jugenheimer Scholarship for students preparing to be Spanish teachers. She now teaches high school Spanish in her hometown of Cicero, Illinois, helping a new generation of students speak Spanish and appreciate Hispanic cultures.

You can contribute to the Jugenheimer Scholarship and invest in our much-needed Spanish teachers. Your gifts to our other scholarship funds are welcome, too:
spanport.illinois.edu/resources/awards.



Learn more about giving opportunities on our website: spanport.illinois.edu/giving.



For Vanessa, teaching extends beyond the classroom. She spent two weeks in Guatemala with other Spanish teachers and students, “hiking a volcano overnight and visiting some popular areas but most importantly spending time with the Mayan community.” They installed stoves in homes, did some electrical and water work, and painted a pre-k school.