U.S. Afro Latino’s narratives

In my dissertation I examine cultural production from the African Diaspora through the optics of Black Atlantic and Hispanic Transatlantic Studies.

By focusing on the cultural production of U.S. Afro-Latinos, I think through the limits of these two fields while, at the same time, encourage dialogue between them, to push their boundaries and achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the African Diaspora.

I explore issues of racial and gendered identities as they are constructed at the individual and national levels, teasing out their significance in the construction of a national imaginary perpetuated by the dominant social discourse and practices in the United States.

Yet, in trying to place my study beyond national frames, I examine how these issues play a role in an imaginary and material construction of a world system kept in place by global hegemonic discourses on race and identity.

I explore these issues through specific moments and works of literature produced by U.S. Afro-Latinos, and examine the ways that they engage with the themes of racial and gender identity. I study Evelio Grillo’s *Black Cuban, Black American: A memoir* (2000), Piri Thomas’s *Down These Mean Streets* (1967), Esmeralda Santiago’s *Almost a Woman* (1998), and Veronica Chambers’s *Mama’s Girl* (1996).
My dissertation is chiefly concerned with the ways in which the African Diaspora is conceptualized depending on a particular cultural producer’s locus of enunciation. My project examines African American cultural production from the United States juxtaposed with Afro-Brazilian cultural production in order to conduct a comparative analysis.

Diasporic narrative and poetry that foregrounds the body, performance, and affective memory is the primary focus of my research.

Moreover, in developing my theoretical framework, I also explore the “diasporous” (a term I borrow from Urayoán Noel) nexus linking two recent poetry EPs: one by the queer Black Mexican American poet, Ariana Brown, the other by Afro-Brazilian slam poet, Mel Duarte.

Throughout my work, I am especially interested in investigating the tensions between notions of the local and the global and the role of the nation in various imaginings and representations of the Diaspora and its history.

Ultimately, I argue that Afro-Brazilian cultural production offers a vital “counternarrative” to the hegemony of African American thought in the Diaspora.

David Beek, Ph. D. Comparative Literature—Spanish

Fulbright US Student Awardee. He will be working on his dissertation at the Federal University of Paraíba in João Pessoa, Brazil from February to November of 2020.

From Brazil, I consider
Conceição Evaristo’s Ponciá Vicência
and
Jarid Arraes’ Heroínas Negras Brasileiras: em 15 cordéis

From the United States, I analyze
John Keene’s Counternarratives
as well as
Gayl Jones’ Corregidora and Song for Anninho.
Miedo negro, poder blanco en la Cuba colonial (Iberoamericana-Verveut, 2015) studies the fears of black slaves and their descendants in Colonial Cuba: fears of a slave revolt, language corruption, racial miscegenation, music and religion, among others.

It has been described as “encyclopedic” and “a pioneering study in the field” (South Atlantic Review).

The first comparative essay on literary and visual images produced by both the supporters of Spanish National Integrism, and the Cuban pro-independence movement between 1868 and 1898.

This pioneering essay analyses plays, novels, and poems published in Cuba and Spain during this period, and the discursive formations by the supporters of both sides.

The book concludes with a chapter dedicated to post-war literature during the crisis of the Cuban Republic.

Professor Jorge Camacho’s three recent books delving into the role of race in Cuban-Spanish debates on war and independence, the powerful reflections of José Martí on Latin American Indigenous, and the racial fears in colonial Cuba.
Our first Graduate Conversatorio featuring Andres Arroyave’s research on Mario Mendoza’s Satanas.

Next presenters 2020
Olivia Cosentino, Ohio State University (January 1st)
Tamara Morgan, Ph.D. Spanish (March 6)
Guillaume Coly, Ph.D. CPLT French (April 3)
Jingsheng Zhang, CPLT Chinese (May 1)

SPAN 881 Film Theory, Aesthetics, and Latin American Cinema
Dr. Andrew Rajca

SPAN 765 Contemporary Spanish American Poets
Dr. Jorge Camacho

SPAN 557 Contemporary Spanish American Literature
Dr. Rebeca Janzen

Whiteness and Other Racial Fictions in the 19th Century Colombian Andes

- explores the literary and visual narratives that created the singular notion of a racially white Colombian Andean Region, highlighting a contrast with the rest of the South American Andes, where indigenous populations remained at the core of literary representations.
- proposes a reading of whiteness as a performance in which bodily traits are combined with non-racial contents such as manners, literacy, and codes of dress to create a desired “National” white body.
- focuses with greater precision on the question of how nineteenth-century Colombian intellectuals understood whiteness, showing that mestizaje alone is not an adequate frame for understanding nineteenth-century efforts at nation-building.