



Welcome back to *Nexos*, the newsletter for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies at UK. Coming this spring: version 2.0 of the LACLS website! Do you have ideas for LACLS events? Contact scotthutson@uky.edu.



On Oct. 5th, LACLS celebrated its fourth annual Symposium, organized by **Carlos de la Torre** (Sociology) and **Dierdra Reber** (Hispanic Studies)

POPULIST AUTHORITARIANISM IN COMPARATIVE AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



Keynote speaker **Kurt Weyland** (UT Austin) argued that Trump's populism differs from populist regimes in Latin America and elsewhere and that Trump's anti-democratic impulses do not pose a serious challenge to democratic institutions in the United States. Major differences include the lack of an economic windfall (as seen in Venezuelan oil during the beginnings of Chávez's regime); the lack of a national crisis (such as inflation); Trump's status as an outsider in the Republican party; the impressive backlash against Trump in civil society, which impedes clear majority support; and Trump's inability to significantly alter institutional structures, such as the Constitution).

Silvia Pedraza (Michigan) compared the military and less democratic revolution led by Castro with the parliamentary and comparatively more democratic Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela. Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union yielded a Communist regime, whereas Venezuela's "Bolivarian" Revolution dodged all such -isms. Pedraza noted two underappreciated aspects of revolutions: 1) the international context, and 2) the role and configuration of domestic opposition to revolutions.

Federico Finchelstein (New School for Social Research) discussed distinctions between fascism and populism. Before World War II, fascism developed on the strength of racialized enemy mongering; after WWII, populism shedded this racism, along with the dictatorships that had always accompanied fascism. Finchelstein focused on the multiple ways in which populism reduces democracy, perhaps the most important being how the populist leader identifies directly with the masses, such that the masses no longer need to speak in their own voice.

Phillip Penix-Tadsen (Delaware) focused on populist use of social media, how Latin America is portrayed in video games, how populists such as Chávez respond to such portrayals, and counter-narratives seen in state-supported game development in Cuba. Games that portray Latin America in the worst light have been commercial flops. The games most reviled by leaders actually have internal structures that evince a value system closer to populist politics than might appear.



Silvia Pedraza, Federico Finchelstein, and Phillip Penix-Tadsen

LACLS graduate student summer travel grant recipients, 2018



Left to right: Kevin Alejandro, Gabriela Montero Shayna Lindquist, Jessica Linz, and Gregory Saxton

Kevin Alejandro (sociology) worked alongside blueberry pickers in Oregon and used interviews to elucidate racial and social hierarchies among migrant farm workers.

Gabriela Montero (anthropology) conducted map-based archival research in Mexico to locate colonial towns that represent potential Pre-conquest archaeological sites in southern Veracruz.

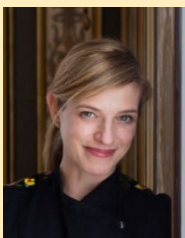
Shayna Lindquist (anthropology) completed language study and highlighted the ethical and logistical reasons why archaeologists must speak the language of the country in which they work.

Jessica Linz (geography) explored affective responses to the 2017 earthquake in Mexico City and its anniversary and documented attempts by neighborhoods to combat gentrification.

Gregory Saxton (political science) conducted research in archives and among informants in Buenos Aires, focusing on how social inequality and perceptions of fairness affected people's evaluations of democracy.



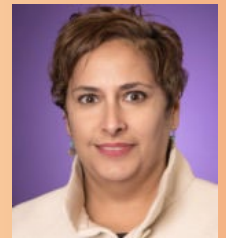
On December 5th, **Dr. Sarah Lyon** (anthropology) and **Dr. Tad Mutersbaugh** (geography) discussed their paper "Territory and Community: Cultivating 'Slow' Coffee" at the third LACLS research workshop. This paper explores how growing coffee allows women in Oaxaca to gain membership in agrarian communes, which entitles them to a voice at assemblies and permits otherwise uncredited labor to be recognized. These benefits of coffee growing help explain why women stick with the crop during price downturns when men often shift to other pursuits. Mutersbaugh and Lyon apply a new materialisms perspective to highlight the active role played by non-humans such as trees and fungi.



Star chef Pati Jinich cooked and spoke about "The Flavors of Jewish Mexico: Immigration and Migrating Foodways", part of A&S Year of Migration.

LACLS co-sponsored events

As part of their "Los Códices" event, Hispanic Studies brought Lori Diel to campus. Dr. Diel (TCU) presented her decipherment of the mid-16th century Codex Mexicanus.



2018-19 LACLS Winter Graduate Student Travel Grant Recipient

Robert Bell (Linguistics) will study a Jamaican creole spoken by Afro-Caribbeans in Costa Rica.