



LALCC

LATIN AMERICAN,
LATINO, AND
CARIBBEAN CENTER

REFLECTING ON FALL 2024 & WHAT'S AHEAD!

DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Central family and friends,

Welcome to the first issue of the LALCC newsletter and thank you all for the interest and support you show us. As an academic and cultural center, we provide student support and professional development while also developing expertise in topics related to Latin American, Latino and Caribbean Studies. This semester we have hosted wonderful cultural and academic programs and have great things planned for the spring semester as well.

I will be on sabbatical through July of 2025 working on several writing projects. In the meantime, Dr. Reinaldo Rojas, Associate Professor of Social Work will be Interim Director. He has some wonderful ideas for spring programming and is looking forward to working with the students! See you in July!

All the best,
Mary Ann Mahony, Ph.D.
Director and Professor of History



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For more information,
visit our website at
ccsu.edu/lalcc



Linktree

Dr. Martin Luther King's Influence among U.S. Latinos and in Latin America and the Caribbean

In this semester that begins with Dr. Martin Luther King Day, the Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean Center takes this opportunity to pay tribute to him and to recognize the important contributions that he made to the United States and beyond. Dr. King's influence on the African American Civil Rights Movement in the United States is well known, but his significance in the U.S. Latino struggle for respect and inclusion and his influence in the Caribbean and Latin America is not.

Dr. King's vision of civil and human rights was inclusive rather than exclusive. He invited Gilberto Gerena Valentín, President of the Puerto Rican Day



Parade at the time, to participate in planning for the March on Washington, to speak at the March, and to bring "Latinos in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Massachusetts" to Washington, DC. [1]

He also invited leaders from the Chicano Movement such as Reies Lopez Tijerina and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez to participate in the Poor People's Campaign.

According to Dr. Juan Coronado, Associate Professor of History, Dr. King and Cesar Chavez, founder of the United Farmworkers movement, were in constant communication. As Chavez wrote in Maryknoll Magazine in 1978, commemorating Dr. King's legacy "Martin Luther King, Jr., was one of these unique servants and from him we learned many of the lessons that have guided us. For these lessons and for his sacrifice for the poor and oppressed, Dr. King's memory will be cherished in the hearts of the farm workers forever." [2]



Gilberto Gerena Valentín
(Source: IL Latino News)

Dr. Martin Luther King's Influence among U.S. Latinos and in Latin America and the Caribbean (cont.)

In a telegram Dr. King sent Cesar Chavez a month before the Civil Rights leader was assassinated in April 1968, he praised the labor leader's effort during a hunger strike, "The plight of your people and ours is so grave that we all desperately need the inspiring example and effective leadership you have given."

Dr. King also brought his message to the Caribbean on several occasions. He spoke at least twice in Puerto Rico, including once at what is now the Interamericana University of Puerto Rico in 1962 and in 1965 at the World Convention of Churches of Christ. On one of his visits, he met Puerto Rican baseball legend and humanitarian Roberto Clemente, for whom King was "a personal hero."^[3] In 1965 and 1967, Dr. King spoke in Jamaica at the University of the West Indies and at the National Stadium.

While Dr. King did not travel throughout Latin America, his work was inspirational there as well. According to educator and activist Abbdias do Nascimento, founder of the Black Consciousness Movement in Brazil that focused on "racial pride and self-determination for black people," Dr. King was, along with Malcolm X, inspirational. In 1971 he said, "They were two of the greatest fighters for the cause of the black man, and their example is an inspiration to us all." Subcomandante Marcos Yvon Le Bot, spokesperson for Mexico's Zapatista movement in the 1990s, also noted that he found inspiration in, among others, Dr. King.

Finally, Chilean exile, novelist, and intellectual Ariel Dorfman has noted that Dr. King's teachings were instrumental, along with those of Gandhi, in the movement to resist the Pinochet military dictatorship in Chile after the 1970s coup and to return that nation to democracy.

Here at the LALCC we honor Dr. King and thank him for his contributions to justice and inclusion for all.

[1] <https://remezcla.com/lists/culture/mlk-latino-community/>

[2] Cesar Chavez' Speeches and writings, Cesar Chavez Foundation.

<https://chavezfoundation.org/speeches-writings/#1549063126369-1084ba02-0e7a>

[3] Latino Rebels. "When Martin Luther King, Jr. Visited Puerto Rico. Latino Rebels. Jan 20, 2014,

<https://www.latinorebels.com/2014/01/20/when-martin-luther-king-jr-visited-puerto-rico/>

FALL HIGHLIGHTS

Salsa Fest



Xiomara Colón (Credit: Stan Godlewski)



The Hartt Salsa All Stars (Credit: Stan Godlewski)



Food trucks (Credit: Stan Godlewski)

To celebrate the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month, the LALCC joined the Latin American Student Organization (LASO) and the MOSAIC Center in hosting Salsa Fest, featuring the Hartt Salsa All-Stars, a salsa dance workshop, and Latin American food trucks on September 25th .

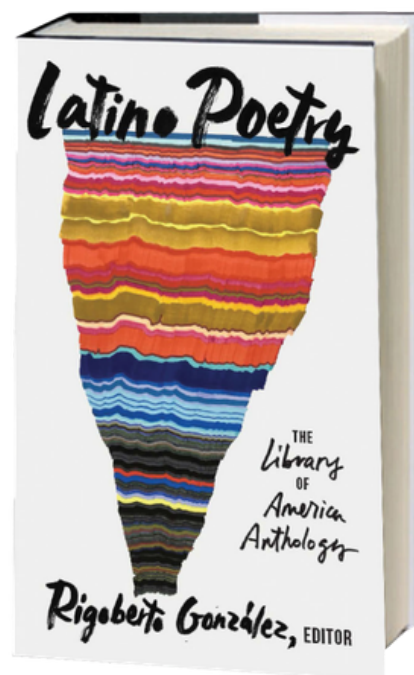
The festivities took place on the Student Center Circle from 12PM to 3PM. Over 200 students enjoyed live music and learned to dance with former officers of the Central Organization for Latin American Dance Awareness (COLADA), Xiomara Colón and Kory Mills, B.A.'15.

The Hartt Salsa All-Stars is a Latin dance band composed of students studying music at the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford.

Latino Poetry: Places We Call Home

In June, the Library of America selected Central as one of 75 partner programs across the country for its national public humanities initiative titled, “Latino Poetry: Places We Call Home.” The anthology contains the work of at least 180 poets writing between the 17th and the 21st centuries. The initiative is directed by Library of America and funded with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Emerson Collective. Assistant Professor Natalie Catasús is the program coordinator.

The LALCC received a second grant of \$4,999 from CTHumanities that enabled us to organize a “Community Reads” program to purchase 100 copies of the anthology to distribute to reading groups and students at Central, at the New Britain Public Library, the Adelante! America program of the Spanish Community of Wallingford, and the Meriden Public Schools Family Resource Center. As part of both programs, we also agreed to host two of the poets published in the anthology at events here in Connecticut.



Library of America

CThumanities

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Latino Poetry Kickoff

On October 2nd, the LALCC launched the Latino Poetry Community Reads program with an open house on the fourth floor of the Elihu Burritt Library. Attendees were treated to a buffet and a performance by Mariachi Mexico Antiquo. Guests included President Toro, Adriana Rodriguez, director of the Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW) Jason Vilani and Rachel Szostek of the New Britain Public Library, and Grants Manager Lian Partridge Kania of CTHumanities, as well as Ana Paula Silva and César Sauer of the Consulate of Brazil in Hartford.

At the Kickoff, our partners each received copies of the anthology. SCOW and the Family Resource Center of Meriden Public Schools will make them available to students involved in their programs, while the copies at the New Britain Public Library will be able available to borrow. Additional copies are available through the LALCC.



Mariachi Mexico Antiquo. (Credit: Shelly Sindland)



Dr. Natalie Catasús, Dr. Mary Ann Mahony, CCSU President Dr. Zulma Toro, Adriana Rodriguez (SCOW), and Lian Partridge Kania (CTHumanities). (Credit: Shelly Sindland)



Open House guests enjoying the buffet. (Credit: Shelly Sindland)

Community Reading With Deborah Paredez

As part of the program, on Oct. 21 and Oct 22, the LALCC and partners hosted community reading programs featuring Mexican American poet Deborah Paredez. Paredez is a professor and the chair of the School of the Arts Writing Program at Columbia University. She is the co-founder of CantoMundo, a national organization dedicated to Latinx poets and poetry as well as the author of four books, including *American Diva* (Norton 2024), *This Side of Skin* (Wings Press 2002), and *Selenidad: Selena, Latinos, and the Performance of Memory* (Duke 2009). At the New Britain Public Library, Paredez discussed her process and read "Walls and Mirrors", a poem about her relationship with her father, a Mexican American U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War. The conversation was moderated by CCSU professors Dr. Julien Strong and Dr. Natalie Catasús.

On October 22nd, Paredez spoke in the Constitution Room of Memorial Hall at an event attended by CCSU students, faculty, and staff, as well as students from the Spanish Community of Wallingford and Meriden Public Schools.



Dr. Natalie Catasús (left) and Dr. Deborah Paredez (right)



Discussion moderated by Dr. Natalie Catasús

What Else Happened?

The Other Side Story: To end Hispanic Heritage Month, on October 24th, the LALCC hosted a performance by Puerto Rican actor, playwright, and director Ángel Vázquez of his one-man show, “The Other Side Story.” The performance, which took place in Torp Theater, Davidson Hall, illustrated the struggles and triumphs of the Puerto Rican diaspora in New York.



Day of the Dead, 2024: CCSU faculty and students created two alters to honor their deceased loved ones for the Day of the Dead, one at the LALCC and the other in the Department of World Languages, Literature, and Cultures. Day of the Dead is celebrated annually in Mexico, Central America, and parts of the U.S. from November 1st to 2nd.




































CREC Impact Academy Visit

The LALCC was delighted to host students from the CREC Impact Academy in Hartford, CT in collaboration with Dr. Juan Coronado, Associate Professor of the History Department. Student assistants presented the Roots of the Caribbean Mural and engaged with the high school students in a few exciting rounds of Flag Bingo.

LALCC Library Expansion

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, our library collection of Latin American, Latino, and Caribbean literature and scholarship has grown to over 3,000 volumes. Student assistants help with cataloging incoming donations and shelving them on the library's 4th floor. Whether for research or personal interest, we invite you to explore our expanding collection!

Flag Bingo

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Flag Bingo is a way to help your students learn geography while also having fun! All you need is a computer, a color printer, paper and markers. The game works just like a regular bingo game with cards of squares to be matched with items that are called. But, instead of letters and numbers, as in traditional bingo, the squares hold the colorful flags and names of the world's nations. Flag bingo is not virtual! You may choose which countries to include and then print your own bingo cards. You will be able to print as many bingo cards as you like through the site. The system then provides you with a bingo caller based on your selections. The caller will randomly call countries.

Keep in mind if you are going to call the game from a computer that is not the one that you created the cards on, you will have to create the cards again. So, please keep track of the names of the nations you choose so that you can choose them again if you change computers.

To set up a game and play, click here:
<https://sites.ccsu.edu/flagbingo/howToPlay.html>.

If you need the LALCC to provide you with bingo cards, email Lozano@ccsu.edu.

Thank You To Our Summer & Fall 2024 Donors!

Kathleen Dougherty, Ph.D.

Kenneth Erickson, Ph.D.

Elizabeth Hansen, Ph.D.

Gilbert Joseph, Ph.D.

Margaret Keck, Ph.D.

Stuart Schwartz, Ph.D.

Katherine Sugg, Ph.D.

Eliza Willis, Ph.D.

Michelle Vega

Joseph Torres Rodriguez

Spring 2025

Going into the Spring 2025 semester, the LALCC will continue to host community reading events around “Latino Poetry: Places We Call Home.” Puerto Rican poet Urayoán Noel has agreed to visit Central for two events, on April 16th & April 17th.

Noel is a writer, translator, and performer from Río Piedras, Puerto Rico. He is currently an Associate Professor of English, Spanish, and Portuguese at New York University.

Noel is the author of ten books in English and Spanish, including the critical study *In Visible Movement: Nuyorican Poetry from the Sixties to Slam* (2014, the first book-length study of Nuyorican poetry and winner of the LASA Latino Studies Book Award); and the poetry collections *Boringkén* (2008, named a Book of the Year by *El Nuevo Día*), and *Transversal* (2021, named a Book of the Year by the New York Public Library).



Noel's featured poem "No Long Ode/ Oda Indebida" is on page 430 of *Latino Poetry: The Library of America Anthology*. Copies are available to borrow through the Elihu Burritt Library or the New Britain Public Library.

There will be two community reading events featuring Dr. Noel, the first of which takes place on Wednesday, April 16 in the Periodicals Room of the New Britain Public Library from 5:30-7:30PM. The second event takes place at CCSU on Thursday, April 17 in the Constitution Room at Memorial Hall from 10:50AM-12:00PM.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE EVENTS IN THE SPRING!

The **LALCC** has more events being planned for this Spring semester!
Stay tuned!



(Photo credits: Shelly Sindland)