



CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

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Message from the Director



There is no doubt that the restrictions on travel, on face-to-face meetings, and on in-person events as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic created unusually challenging circumstances for our work. Three of our staff members were hired after the campus shut down in March of 2020 and have yet to see the inside of their offices! Nonetheless, CLAS and its staff adapted quickly, mastered new technologies, and responded creatively, allowing us to continue our work of enhancing research, teaching and community engagement related to Latin America.

In many ways we thrived. Though we missed seeing people in person, the use of video-conferencing technologies allowed us to invite speakers from Colombia, Brazil, the UK, Mexico, Chile and other parts of Latin America that would not have been possible otherwise. Our work with our partners at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC), K-12 schools, the state's Portuguese DLI program, and BYU continued, allowing us to strengthen Latin American Studies curriculum throughout the state. In March of 2020 we had to scramble to transition our Summer Intensive Nahuatl Language and Culture

Program to an online/zoom format, and were once again able to offer 4 levels of Nahuatl instruction to our largest cohort of students ever. Travel restrictions really affected the ability of LAS faculty and students to do their work. Our talented students who were awarded prestigious FLAS Fellowships and Tinker Field Research Grants had to cancel or postpone their research trips to Latin America, but we hope that as travel restrictions ease they will be able to make those trips soon.

My term as Director of CLAS ends on June 30, 2021. I first joined CLAS as the Associate Director in 2011 and became its director in 2016. These 10 years have been the most professionally rewarding of my career. This is in part because of all that we have accomplished at the center, but mainly because I learned so much from colleagues and co-workers with whom I've collaborated so intensely. CLAS has a dedicated staff and about 100 affiliated faculty from nearly every college across the university. Because of all of their talents and dedication, CLAS – and as a result the University of Utah – now enjoys a strong national reputation as a preeminent center for the study of Latin America. We hope to be able to announce the appointment of a new director very soon. In the meantime, I am very optimistic for the future of Latin American Studies on campus.

This end-of-year newsletter highlights some of our accomplishments and the accomplishments of LAS faculty and students during the past year. I hope you'll consider supporting our work by donating to the Latin American Studies Development Fund. Practically all of the donations we receive go directly to support the work of our talented students and faculty.

I hope all of you stay safe and healthy in 2021!

Claudio Holzner

[Read Director Message here](#)

Recognitions

CLAS Student of the Year

Congratulations to Melanie Montelongo-Bernardino for receiving the Latin American Studies 2021 Student of the Year award! Melanie is graduating as a triple major in Latin American Studies, International Studies, and Spanish.

The CLAS Student of the Year award comes with a \$100 award and is given annually to an exceptional senior in the Latin American Studies program who is graduating in spring or summer of the academic year.

[Read more about the Student of the Year Award and Melanie's Accomplishments](#)



Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships: Summer 2020 and Academic Year 2020-2021

We want to recognize and congratulate all the FLAS recipients awarded during the Summer 2020 and Academic Year 2020-2021 for being selected for these nationally competitive fellowships.

The Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) offers U.S. Department of Education Title VI funded Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships. Academic year FLAS Fellowships provide full tuition support plus a stipend to graduate and undergraduate students in any department across campus who include area studies and either Nahuatl, Portuguese, or Quechua language study in their coursework. Summer FLAS fellowships provide up to \$8500 to support intensive summer language study. Each year CLAS awards \$300,000 in FLAS scholarships, which provide a stipend and tuition support to approximately 20 undergraduate and graduate students across campus, and supports about

[View awardees here](#)

Faculty Recognition

Congratulations to our amazing faculty on their awards, publications, and accomplishments this past year. The teaching and research of LAS - affiliated faculty covers all of Latin America and spans academic disciplines across the University. Here we have highlighted the work of two of our talented faculty, and to see more examples of faculty accomplishments, [click here](#).



Talia Dajes, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, World Languages and Cultures received the [Ramona W. Cannon Award for Teaching Excellence in the Humanities](#) awarded by the University's College of Humanities. Professor Dajes was also awarded the Best Essay Award from the Latin American Studies Association's (LASA) Film Studies Section for her essay, "[Crímenes íntimos: incesto y violencia política en el cine peruano contemporáneo](#)" (published in the Spring 2020 issue of A Contracorriente: una revista de estudios latinoamericanos).



Shane Macfarlan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology received the 2020-2021 Faculty Award for Advancing Equity and Connecting Communities from the College of Social and Behavioral Science. Professor Macfarlan was also awarded tenure from the Department of Anthropology and published three articles in peer reviewed journals.

K-12 Outreach Update: Award winning authors “visit” Utah classrooms

This past March 2021 the Asia Center and Center for Latin American Studies hosted virtual visits with two award winning children’s literature authors, Mitali Perkins and Roger Mello. These outreach events were conducted in collaboration with READ U (Reading with Empathy, Awareness, and Diversity with U) initiative in the College of Education and Utah's Portuguese DLI (Dual Language Immersion) Program.

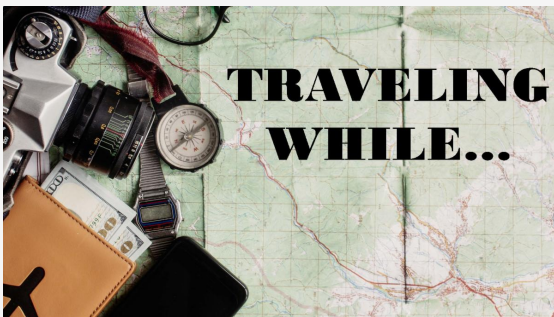


Mitali Perkins, Américas Award and South Asia Book award winner, visited five first grade classes in the Granite school district via zoom. She read from her most recent book *Home is In Between* a title that details the experiences of a young girl moving from India to the United States. Perkins addressed questions in English and Spanish from the students in attendance.



Roger Mello, Han Christen Andersen award winner, visited with Portuguese Dual Language immersion middle school classes throughout the state of Utah via an asynchronous webinar. The entire program was in Brazilian Portuguese. Mello gave a presentation about his experiences as an author, illustrator and the creative process. He also fielded questions from students in Brazilian Portuguese.

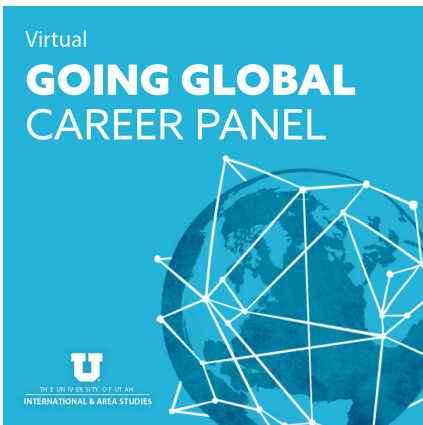
Traveling While...



Traveling While... is a series whose purpose is to share stories from marginalized individuals (e.g. women, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+, etc.) about their travel and study abroad experiences, and how those experiences have affected their life today. In doing so, this series aims to acknowledge the complexities and challenges that marginalized groups experience while abroad. During these one on one sessions, interviewees will answer questions about their time abroad and how their identity affected that time from pre-departure all the way to the return home. IAS hopes that this will serve as a resource for students to reference as they prepare for their own study abroad experiences.

[Watch our first Traveling While... episode here](#)

Featured Events



Going Global Career Panel

What a year it has been! With COVID-19 creating new event guidelines and protocols, we brought our annual Going Global Career Panels to you virtually. The Going Global Career Panel was a wonderful opportunity for students to hear from professionals and receive some great tips on how to get started in international careers. During the panels, speakers highlighted the possibilities available to students pursuing interdisciplinary degrees in Asian, International, Latin American, and Middle East Studies. Following the panels, we held a virtual networking session where students can spoke with panelists and a host of networkers one-on-one about their career goals and aspirations.

Our first panel was held in November during International Education Week in conjunction with the Career and Professional Development Center. During our second panel in March, we wanted to highlight the global careers, international experiences, and language skills of BIPOC individuals and how those skills and experiences have benefitted them in the workplace, so we held our first ever BIPOC Going Global Career panel. With these two panels we were able to host many individuals with diverse professional backgrounds working in fields such as student success, international policy, tourism, economic development, banking, linguistics, and many more, from private and public sector employers ranging from Goldman Sachs to the State Department.

If you would like to join us as a panelist in the future, please email our Communications Coordinator Meredith Medina.

Email

2020-2021 Academic Events Links

Did you miss any of our events this year? Did you want the chance to watch them again? Below we have the events that took place this academic year with YouTube links for you to enjoy!

Visit our
website



Featured Class Fall 2021



POLS 5960-002 Erosion in Democracy

Instructor: Laura Gamboa

M/W 3-4:20 p.m.
Location: GC 4680

Since the 2000s, countries across the world, have seen the rise of potential autocrats. Executives with hegemonic aspirations like Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey or Viktor Orbán in Hungary, have used their popularity to hinder free and fair elections, political rights, and civil liberties effectively eroding democracy. What circumstances bring these politicians to power? What factors allow them to undermine democratic regimes? What, if anything, can be done to stop them? In this course we will answer these questions. We will analyze of the causes, consequences, and remedies to democratic backsliding, covering topics like weak institutions, polarization, populism, corruption, false or fake news, and opposition strategies using examples from different countries like Venezuela, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, Bolivia, the Philippines, Brazil, and the United States.

This course is part of the Democratic Erosion Consortium. It is taught in universities across the world. The assignments include writing and publishing blog posts, collaborating with US and international agencies in creating reports on democratic backsliding, or participating and reporting on political events. Not only will it allow you to interact with your classmates, but also with students from other universities inside and outside the US.

To preview the shared syllabus and assignments, [click here](#).



POLS 5690-002 Erosion in Democracy

Instructor: Laura Gamboa

Days: Monday/Wednesday

Time: 3-4:30 p.m.

Location: GC 4680

This course is part of the Democratic Erosion Consortium. It is taught in universities across the world. The assignments include writing and publishing blog posts, collaborating with US and international agencies in creating reports on democratic backsliding, or participating and reporting on political events. Not only will it allow you to interact with your classmates, but also with students from other universities inside and outside the US.

Syllabus and
assignments

Click image to enlarge.

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American Studies
801-581-6101

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