Encuentros, Summer 2011

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Regardless of their political opinions, Argentineans watched their TVs as Kirchner’s wife and successor in office, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (CFK in media slang) led the funeral of her partner in life. But television screens also showed a continuous human flow to the governmental palace, the Casa Rosada. To the conspicuous surprise of mainstream media, thousands of people spent several hours in line to pay their respects to the former president and to show support for his wife. In a country used to staged demonstrations of popular support, no one could help noticing that Kirchner’s funeral was massively and spontaneously attended.

This popular demonstration of support for Kirchner shred into pieces the narrative that large media groups had been spinning for several years about the Kirchners’ growing unpopularity and isolation from “the people.” Argentineans had been bombarded with an uninterrupted stream of alarmist news about the imminent catastrophe into which the Kirchnerist government was supposedly leading the country. Kirchner himself was often compared with Hitler, Stalin, Ceausescu, and Nero, not only by opposition politicians but also by mass media pundits - not very differently from how certain news channels depict President Barack Obama in the United States, but with the aggravating factor that the appellative hubris in Argentina was not limited to the far-right media.

We can only understand the cognitive dissonance between media discourse and political reality by examining the deep transformations of Argentine society between 1990 and 2010. Since 2003, Argentina has experienced a slow but steady process of state reconstruction after the profound crisis of legitimacy that resulted from the economic and political shipwreck of
2001. During the riots that put an end to a decade of neo-liberal policies and cut short two presidencies (Fernando De La Rua’s in December 2001 and Adolfo Rodríguez Saá’s in January 2002) the whole political system was shattered by street protests that demanded not only policy changes but also a redefinition of the traditional political system. Anti-globalization and far left thinkers saw Argentina as a social laboratory for new forms of participation and social organization. The legitimacy of the Argentine state created between 1850 and 1880 had probably never known such a serious threat.

Néstor Kirchner was one of the most important political figures (though not the only one) in the reconstruction of state legitimacy. In a sense, he was an extension of Eduardo Duhalde, the 2002-2003 interim president who chose Kirchner to run for office, and against whom Kirchner turned once in power, when Duhalde threatened to undermine Kirchner’s growing influence in the powerful province of Buenos Aires. Duhalde began the reconstruction of political institutions but he eventually failed because he relied on the same assumptions and similar actors as the pre-2001 crisis system. The multi-party cabinet he formed could not protect him from the popular outrage that was expressed in constant demonstrations, one of which ended with the death of two social activists and sealed Duhalde’s fate.

In this context, Kirchner won the presidential election with only 22 percent of the votes, a result that could have undermined his legitimacy. But from the very beginning of his presidency, he showed an understanding of the changes that the 2001 crisis had introduced. Realizing that traditional party structures were not enough to consolidate state power, he encouraged social movements to join his electoral front (the “Frente para la Victoria”). Or, according to his critics, he co-opted these movements into the mechanisms of state power. Be that as it may, Kirchner realized that the traditional political mechanisms centered on the Peronist and Radical parties, though necessary, no longer stood alone.

Similarly, his presidency was marked by sometimes careful and sometimes frontal attacks on traditional institutions suspected of having collaborated with the policies of the neo-liberal decade (1989-2001). From the very beginning, the International Monetary Fund was at the center of the Kirchnerist discourse, since its policies were blamed (with good reasons) for the unemployment, rising poverty, and eventual economic collapse of Argentina. At the beginning of his presidency, Kirchner preferred not to focus on the economic agents that supported neo-liberal policies from the “inside.” Although eventually some of them (like the private pension funds) were nationalized, the fortunes accumulated in the 1990s by different groups and individuals remain in good shape to this day.

Kirchner’s government promoted trials against perpetrators of crimes against humanity during the military dictatorship of...
1976-1983. Although some of those accused were already being processed by the justice system, Kirchner listened to the demands of the human rights organizations that had worked for a decade to reverse the pardons granted by former President Menem. Simultaneously, Kirchner initiated impeachment of Supreme Court judges deeply associated with the protection of corrupt practices during the 1990s. The Court was almost completely replaced with prestigious jurists who gave the institution the aura of impartiality, which it had been lacking. Yet at the same time, and under popular pressure, the Kirchnerist administration favored the passage of a bill that hardened procedural laws for criminal suspects – laws that are largely responsible for the inhuman conditions of the country’s prisons.

Similar policies continued under Cristina Kirchner’s presidency. Pundits spent gallons of ink discussing the differences between “She” and “He.” For certain news commentators, the figure of Néstor Kirchner was omnipresent. Mainstream media consistently presented him as the “real power” behind his wife’s decisions. It was no secret that Kirchner and CFK worked as a team when it came to decision-making. However, CFK’s role was undermined partly because of the sexism that still permeates Argentine political culture, and partly because the media blamed Kirchner for the policies that most irritated traditional groups of power.

The massive popular demonstrations accompanying Kirchner’s funeral shows that the former president succeeded in regenerating the state legitimacy that had been shaken by the 2001-2002 crisis. Thousands of Argentineans poured into the streets to mourn the former chief of state who was also the president of the country’s largest political party. The events of late October also showed that the new legitimacy patiently reconstructed by the Kirchnerist administration relied on a new basis. For once, no party or union orchestrated the demonstrations of support. It was a “multi-

The process of state re-construction was favored by a formidable economic expansion, the product of a series of external circumstances (particularly the rise in the price of commodities) and of economic policies that accompanied the economic cycle. Ignoring the advice of neo-liberal economists, the Kirchnerist administration poured the growing budgetary surplus into increasing levels of consumption that had dropped before and during the economic crisis. It did so via direct subsidies to poor families and unemployed workers and via direct investment in basic infrastructure. Policies, such as favoring salary increases in both the private and public sector, also contributed to a mild but noticeable tendency towards reversing the concentration of wealth. As a result of the economic boom, unemployment rates fell from more than 20 percent to seven percent. Many low-income Argentines not only benefited from a significant increase in economic well-being, but also felt the concrete impact of public policies for the first time in years, or decades.

The offensive against media conglomerates began in 2006 but intensified during CFK’s presidency. When the media conglomerates took sides with opposition parties as a result of this clash, the government passed what is, according to some UN officials, one of the most progressive and democratic bills on the concentration of media. This law severed the relationship between the government and some of the largest media conglomerates. The media corporations, led by the Clarín Group, joined forces with landowner organizations, which resented a tax policy that attempted to cap exorbitant agricultural profits. This media-business alliance managed to give consistency to an anti-Kirchnerist political coalition that eventually obtained a majority in the 2009 parliamentary elections. A year later that coalition found itself rapidly vanishing while the popularity of CFK and Kirchner rose again, but only in “real life.” Media narratives offered a different, apocalyptic option to those who were willing to receive it.

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In support of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (“DREAM Act”), The National Immigration Law Center stated:

“[this is] bipartisan legislation that addresses the tragedy of young people who grew up in the United States and have graduated from our high schools, but whose future is circumscribed by our current immigration laws. Under current law, these young people generally derive their immigration status solely from their parents, and if their parents are undocumented or in immigration limbo, most have no mechanism to obtain legal residency, even if they have lived most of their lives here in the U.S. The DREAM Act would provide such a mechanism for those who are able to meet certain conditions.”

Current federal law places undocumented students at risk of deportation, precludes lawful employment, and discourages states from granting students postsecondary educational benefits such as “in-state” residency status for tuition purposes.

The DREAM Act proposed a path to citizenship for these students, but only if they complied with a series of requirements. Conditional permanent resident status would apply for those who had immigrated to the United States by the age of 15 or had resided in the United States for at least five years, had good moral character, and had graduated from a United States high school or had received a GED. This status would continue for six years at which point students would become permanent residents, if they had maintained...
Scholarship Winners

ROBERT MARCELIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Robert Marcelin Memorial Scholarship was endowed by employees of Ameritech Corporation to honor the late Mr. Marcelin, a co-worker and friend who graduated from Northern Illinois University. The committee, which includes principal donor Ms. Alison Thomson, meets annually to select an outstanding student of Latino heritage. The award for 2010 went to Daniel Ortega, who is studying Mechanical Engineering with a focus on design.

Pictured from left to right are CLLAS Director Dr. Michael Gonzales, the 2010-11 Marcelin Award recipient Daniel Ortega and Alison Thomson.

CENTER FOR LATINO AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES’ LATINO SCHOLARSHIP

Since 2006, the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies has sponsored an undergraduate scholarship competition for students of Latino heritage. Candidates are judged on their academic achievement and promise. This year’s winner was Hugo Jacobo, a political science major with a minor in Latino and Latin American studies. After graduating, Hugo plans to earn a Master’s degree in public policy and work for an organization that specializes in resolving problems important to minority communities.

Dr. Gonzales with CLLAS Latino Scholarship recipient Hugo Jacobo.

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good moral character, avoided lengthy foreign travel, graduated either from a two-year college or vocational school, completed two years of study toward a B.A. degree, or served in the United States military for at least two years. The Department of Homeland Security would supervise this process for two years.

Many politicians, scholars, activists, and businessmen supported this educational measure on behalf of students who view the United States as their home. Undocumented students seeking their undergraduate degrees also participated in numerous rallies, interviews, sit-ins and hunger strikes in support of the DREAM Act. The media additionally commented on the potential personal tragedy for these students if they were deported.

On December 8, 2010, the House of Representatives passed the DREAM Act by a vote of 216 to 198, and ten days later the Senate voted 54 to 40 in favor of the legislation. This vote, however, fell short of the 60 votes required for cloture. The DREAM Act, therefore, did not become law.

During the public debate over the DREAM Act, opponents to the legislation voiced several criticisms which misrepresented its intent and purpose:

CLAIM 1: “The DREAM Act provides ‘amnesty’ to ‘millions of illegal immigrants.’”

The term “amnesty” infers an act of forgiveness for a prior offense, but those qualifying under the Act committed no offense.

The DREAM Act applied to college students who met strict qualifications and would have been monitored by the Department of Homeland Security.

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CLAIM II: "The DREAM Act would allow students to become citizens before others who had arrived in legal status."

The DREAM Act had no such provision. In fact, DREAMers had to comply with special guidelines and could not preempt others who had immigrated through immigration procedures.

CLAIM III: "American students would have to compete with immigrant students for admission to college."

At least ten states do not base their admission policies on citizenship status, and most community colleges have open enrollment admissions policies. The number of DREAMers seeking legal status represents less than five percent of the total number of students attending United States universities and colleges and they would not displace citizen students.

GUADALUPE T. LUNA is Professor of Law at Northern Illinois University.
C LLAS Activities
FALL 2010 - SPRING 2011

OCTOBER 6, 2010. The Latino Resource Center, the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies, the Women’s Studies Program, the Student Association, and the Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Language and Literacy, co-sponsored a lecture by acclaimed writer SANDRA CISNEROS (above, right with Sandy López).

Cisneros, speaking before a large audience of faculty, students, and staff, discussed current short stories she is writing, her recently completed screen play for The House on Mango Street, and commented about prose writing. “Writing is a process of walking deep into a question, and walking, and walking, until we find the answer,” Cisneros said. “Everyone has a distinctive voice,” she added. “There is no one like you in the whole universe. You’re like snow.” Cisneros read from her book in progress titled “Infinito,” answered questions, signed autographs and posed for photographs.

OCTOBER 28, 2010. The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies co-hosted DR. RAMÓN A. GUTÍERREZ, the Preston and Sterling Morton Distinguished Service Professor and Director of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture at the University of Chicago. Professor Gutiérrez presented the W. Bruce Lincoln Memorial Lecture, funded by the Lincoln Endowment and organized by the History Department.

Gutiérrez spoke on “Thinking About Race in a Post-Racial America: From Plessy v. Ferguson to Barack Obama,” which surveyed shifting popular, legal, and scientific notions of race in the United States within the context of political discourse.

FEBRUARY 17, 2011. The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies co-sponsored with Lambda Upsilon Lambda, DREAM Action NIU, and the Latino Resource Center, a discussion by DREAM Walkers FELIPE MATOS and JUAN RODRÍGUEZ. They presented a moving account of their experiences while walking 1,500 miles from Miami to Washington D.C. in support of the DREAM Act (The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act).

FEBRUARY 22-24, 2011. The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies sponsored a “Latino Film Festival” that featured the documentaries “Which Way Home,” “On the Edge,” and “The Other Side of Immigration.” Filmmaker Professor LAURA VAZQUEZ (right) led the discussion of “On the Edge,” her moving look at homelessness among women and children in the United States; and Professors SARAH BLUE and BARBARA POSADAS discussed issues raised in the other documentaries on immigration and social justice.

MARCH 8, 2011. The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies, Women’s Studies, the Graduate Colloquium Committee, the Latino Resource Center, the Department of Sociology, the Department of Political Science, and the Division of International Affairs, co-sponsored a colloquium by DR. KATHARINE M. DONATO, Professor and Chair of Sociology at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Donato presented a lecture titled “How Many Women? How Many Men? Gender in International Migration,” and led a seminar on “Researching Women’s Immigration Patterns.”

MARCH 22, 2011. The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies and the Graduate Colloquium Committee co-sponsored Professor RICK A. LÓPEZ, Associate Professor of History at Amherst College. Dr. López lectured on “Centennial Commemorations and the Crafting of the Mexican Nation” and led a seminar on “Alternative Narratives of Popular Experience in Mexican Nation Formation.” López’s lecture considered changes

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in popular culture following the Mexican Revolution of 1910, primarily as presented during the centennial celebration of political independence in 1921. López’s talk drew from his recently published book, Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State after the Revolution (Duke, 2010). His seminar discussed the research methodology applied in collecting information for the book from informants in Olinalá, Guerrero, whose artists figured prominently in his study.

**MARCH 28-29, 2011.** The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies and the Graduate Colloquium Committee co-sponsored presentations by **DR. MARIE E. FRANCOIS**, Associate Professor and Chair of the History Department and the Chicano Studies Department at California State University, Channel Islands. Dr. Francois lectured on “Laundering Identity: Laundresses in Mexico City in the Nineteenth-Century,” which examined issues of labor, identity formation, and gender among laundresses in late colonial and early republican Mexico City. Her graduate seminar compared the experiences and perceptions of female laundresses in nineteenth-century Mexico City and Buenos Aires within the context of labor history.

**APRIL 7, 2011.** NIU President’s Office and Presidential Commission on Persons with Disabilities, the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders, the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies, the Graduate School and the Office of the Provost co-sponsored a lecture by **DR. FERNANDO TORRES-GIL**, Professor of Social Welfare and Public Policy and Director of the Center for Policy Research on Aging at UCLA Professor Torres-Gil spoke on “Aging with a Disability: Nexus of Demographics and Public Policy.” Prior to his lecture, Dr. Torres-Gil met with NIU students at the Latino Center where he shared his personal journey and discussed current entitlement and immigration reform.

**APRIL 7-10, 2011.** The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies, the NIU School of Music, the Student Association Music Society, and the Student Association Percussion Club, co-sponsored a lecture and concerts by **CHRIS WASHBURN**, Associate Professor of Music at Colombia University, and composer, trombonist, and bandleader of SYOTOS (See You On The Other Side), the group he founded in 1992.

Washburne, the author of Sounding Salsa (Temple, 2008), lectured on the history of salsa music in New York City at the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies, and gave three concerts with students and faculty from the NIU School of Music, including Center faculty associate **GREG BEYER**, Associate Professor of Music.
# 2010 Faculty Publications and Activities

**Gregory Beyer**  
Associate Professor, School of Music

**Publications**


**Performances**

Performed a solo recital at the 2nd International Percussion Festival in Shenyang, China, October 14, 2010.

**Recordings**


**Sarah A. Blue**  
Assistant Professor, Geography

**Publications**


**Winifred Creamer**  
Presidential Research Professor, Anthropology

**Papers Presented**

“Reuse of Late Archaic (3000-1800 B.C.) Monumental Sites in The Norte Chico Region of Peru,” presented at the 75th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, April 14-18, 2010, St. Louis, MO. (With Jonathan Haas and Alvaro Ruiz)


“Promoting Early Literacy for ELLs at Pre-School to Second Grade,” presented at the 54th Annual Convention of the International Reading Association, Chicago, IL, May, 2010. (With M. Mondschein)

**Louise Ciallella**  
Associate Professor, Foreign Language and Literatures

**Papers Presented**


“Al tirar de un hilo en Gregorio y yo de Maria Martinez Sierra,” presented at the XX Congreso de la AILCFH, University of Texas, Austin, TX, October, 2010.


**Mayra C. Daniel**  
Assistant Professor of Literacy Education

**Publications**

Reading Inventory for Spanish Speakers. East Dubuque, IL: Kendall Hunt. (With J. Johns)

**Papers Presented**


MICHAEL J. GONZALES  
Distinguished Research Professor, History Director, Center for Latino and Latin American Studies

PUBLICATIONS


PAPERS PRESENTED


ANNE HANLEY  
Associate Professor, History

PUBLICATIONS


PAPERS PRESENTED

JEFF KOWALSKI  
Professor, School of Art

PAPERS PRESENTED
“Expressions of ‘Maya Identity’ in Contemporary Artworks from Yucatán and Guatemala,” presented at the Second Triennial Conference of the Association for Latin American Art, dedicated to the theme of “Origins of State/Origins of Identity” at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA, November 12-14, 2010. (With Mary Katherine Scott, Kryssi Staikidis)

Presented “Art versus Artifact: Great Divide, Cultural Continuum, or Institutional Category?,” a keynote lecture at Trinity University, San Antonio, TX, in conjunction with the exhibition “Crafting Maya Identity: Contemporary Maya Wood Sculptures from the Puuc Region, Yucatán, Mexico,” at the Michael and Noemi Neidorff Art Gallery, Dicke Art Building, November 5, 2010.

ROSITA LOPEZ  
Professor, Leadership, Education Psychology, and Foundations

PAPERS PRESENTED


“Latinas in Educational leadership: Confronting the Challenges,” presented for the National Council of Professors of Educational, NCPEA, Washington, DC, August 3-6, 2010.


“Preparing New Teachers from Diverse Backgrounds for Success in Diverse Settings,” presented at the Academy for Educational Studies Critical Questions in Education Conference from Missouri State University, Chicago, IL, November 8-9, 2010. (With I. H. Marcano)

ELOY E. MERINO
Associate Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures

PUBLICATIONS


EUGENE PERRY
Professor, Geology and Environmental Geosciences

PUBLICATIONS

“Carbon and Oxygen Isotopic Composition of Speleothems from Yucatán, Mexico,” presented at North Central Section Meeting of GSA, March, 2011. (With Meredith Ayers and Monica Carroll)

LEILA PORTER
Associate Professor, Anthropology

PUBLICATIONS
“Mycophagy and its Influence on Habitat Use and Ranging Patterns in Callimico goeldii,” American Journal of Physical Anthropology 142: 468-475. (With Paul A. Garber)

“The Ecology of Exudate Feeding and Exudate Production in Saguinus and Callimico, ” presented at the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, Albuquerque, NM, April 17, 2010. (With Christopher Gilbert and John Fleagle)

LINDA SABORIO
Assistant Professor, Foreign Languages and Literatures

PUBLICATIONS