Celebrating 50 Years of LALS
A letter from the Chair

By Fernando Rosenberg

As I reflect back on these last three years of being the program’s chair, I realize that I knew little about the long history that preceded me until my colleague Silvia Arrom, on the occasion of our 50th anniversary celebration, filled me in. This is a history that I want to share with you as I finish my tenure as chair, because it should be a source of pride for our alumni, students, and colleagues.

Founded in the Spring of 1963, the then called Latin American Studies program, was one of the oldest in the country. The 1959 Cuban Revolution was the beginning of a wave of radical social movements throughout Latin America, and in 1961 President J.F. Kennedy proposed a new framework for hemispheric partnership called the Alliance for Progress, intending to counter the appeal of the leftist political movements. This environment brought Latin America to the attention of the U.S. academy. Brandeis’ then President Abram Sachar realized that Latin America needed to be studied in its specificity and complexity and traveled through the

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Que en Paz Descanse: On September 15, a beautiful Saturday afternoon, hundreds of friends and family gathered at the Gifford School in Weston to celebrate the life of Daniel Rothenberg, who passed away in August. Through their foundation, Daniel and Susan Rothenberg are generous supporters of the Latin American and Latino Studies Program to the great benefit of students and faculty, helping to make it a vibrant program even as they have supported many other causes, people and programs in Boston. We would like to express our deepest gratitude and condolences to Daniel's family.

Highlighted LALS Events 2012-2013

Fall 2012

**September 21st**
Nicaraguan activist and doctor Rosa Elena Bello, keynote address “Village by Village, Barrio by Barrio: Integrated Development in Nicaragua”

**September 22nd**
Women’s and Gender Studies Fall Distinguished Faculty Lecture, featuring Professor Silvia Arrom, Professor of History and Jane’s Professor of Latin American and Latino Studies, “Hiding in Plain Sight, but Lost to History: Charitable Ladies in 19th Century Mexico”

**October ¡AHORA!**
Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

**October 9th**
Professor Salvodon lead a discussion of “Imagining Freedom in the Caribbean” on issues of translation for English-speaking audiences and contemporary fiction set during the period of slavery

**October 9th**
Witness for Peace New England presents Ligna Pulido, Indigenous leader from Colombia

**Oct 11th**
Michael Nava, Chicano novelist, gave a public reading from his novel The City of Palaces

**Oct 17th**
Latin America and Spain Study Abroad Panel

**Oct 20th**
Pablo Ziegler and his Classical Tango Quartet concert, part of the Tango Residency through Music Unites Us (http://www.musicunitesus.info/schedule-fall2012.html)

**Oct 23**
Lecture and tasting from Kallari indigenous chocolate cooperative (http://www.kallari.com/chocolate.html)

**November 14th**
Panel discussion with students who have returned from time abroad in Spain, Argentina, and Chile,

**November 15th**
Jane’s Travel Grant Presentations: Leah Smith ’13, Salvador, Brazil - “Potent Minds & Sterile Bodies: A Discussion of Desire, Decisions and Bodily Experience Among Surgically Sterilized, Low-Income Women in Salvador, Brazil”

Terrance Hall, MA ’13, Tulum, Mexico - ”Learning to Speak Antropología”

**December 5th**
Dalia Wassner “The Sword, the Pen, and the Uterus: The Role of Jewish Latin American
Women in Creating Inclusive Public Spheres”

Spring 2013
March 1st
LALS “Meet the Majors and Minors” event

March 13th
LALS 50th Anniversary Celebration:
Our America/Nuestra América: The Future of Area Studies
Featuring Distinguished Brandeis Alumni
Peter Kornbluh ’78, Frances Hagopian ’73, and Jeff Arak ’07

March 14th
Special Screening of Documentary
Filmmaker Jeff Arak’s ’07
"Life on Death Beach"
Wasserman Cinematheque

April 30th
Film screening and discussion of
“Pachakuti: Art and Revolution in the Andes”
Wasserman Cinematheque

May 2
LALS Luncheon

Congratulations to our graduating seniors!

Marc Alsina       Allyson Cartter    Caroline Duchin  Maya Jacob       Leah Smith

Jane’s Contest for Best Photography

LALS developed this contest as a complement to our Jane’s Essay Prize for best writing. We have had a number of wonderful submissions and are pleased to announce the first annual winners of the Photography Contest: Thanks to our 2013 judges Javier Urcid and Daniel Oran.

First place: Allyson Cartter for her photograph “Lake Titicaca”
From the judges: A lovely composition captured by Allyson Cartter. The man rowing divides the image, with land on one side and water on the other. The laid back atmosphere and local attire makes for a beautiful perspective of the area and speaks to the local culture.
* First Place Photograph on cover of Newsletter
Second place: Petra Nelson for her photograph “A Blend of Religions”, San Juan Chamula, Chiapas. From the judges: A wonderful illustration of the diverse traditions incorporated into Mexican culture. The old decrepit church juxtaposed with the wide array of offerings and the modern architecture in the background makes for a very interesting subject. Nelson has captured a scene which juxtaposes the old and new within Mexico which are so often at odds.
WOW Fellows & Study Abroad

This year 24 students studied abroad in Latin America including in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Andrea Verdeja ’14, Centro de Estudios Montessori de Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
The Centro de Estudios Montessori de Santo Domingo is a Dominican institution dedicated to the formation of elementary school teachers under the Montessori method. Additionally, the CEMSD has a social service department whose mission is to help underprivileged children from impoverished urban slums. CEMSD offers after school and summer classes to this vulnerable population to reinforce the weak academics they receive from the public school system. Andrea will be receiving a training of the Montessori method and thereafter will help impart classes to elementary school girls in El Caliche, one of the most impoverished urban slums of Santo Domingo. She will be helping teach Math, Science and Language to a group of about 20 girls, as well as leading group activities, arts and crafts, and recreational games.

Nicholas Medina ’14, Osa Conservation, Puerto Jiménez, Golfito, Costa Rica
Osa Conservation is a non-profit organization that dedicates its efforts to protect the biodiversity of the Osa Peninsula on the Pacific shore of Costa Rica. It coordinates efforts between volunteers, students, and researchers who want and ask to do research in the tropics. Their approach to conservation is multi-faceted: they track birds, mammals, sea turtles, forests and various Osa ecosystems, and apply educational, economic, and management expertise to conservation. They also work to engage society in projects regarding ecological sustainability to inform local communities affected by environmental issues and diminish the gap in scientific knowledge across worlds. Nicholas will help monitor. He will study Osa’s various plots of recently-planted native species with which they are trying to conserve and restore the peninsula’s biodiverse ecosystems. He will also conduct his own research in which he will compare levels of sequestered carbon across different types of habitats: like reforesting plantations with variable treatments, secondary forest, primary forest, and early- and late-successional reforested plots.

Essays, Theses & Dissertations

Julia Kuperminc (Hispanic Studies) “Buena memoria: El ensayo fotográfico como mecanismo de construcción de memorias colectivas”

Zoe Shiovitz (Hispanic Studies) “Cien años de soledad: Una identidad postcolonial”

Mrianalini Tankha (Anthropology) dissertation: “Conditional Currencies: Supervision, Innovation and Conversion in Cuba’s Dual Economy”


Terrance Hall (Anthropology) MA paper: “Reappropriating the Nature of the Frontier”

Faculty Awards & Notes

Christina Espinosa (Sustainable International Development, Heller School) - Explored the effect of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) on gender relations and on ethnic identities among users of the ICT stations in the area of the IFAD projects in the Southern highlands of Peru.

Lucía Reyes de Deu (Romance Studies) - conducted research among library, archive, and popular media resources based around El Círculo del Magisterio during the years 1905-1930. This research feeds into her larger project that explores the connections between the public educational system and the development of the modern nation in turn of the century Argentina.
Elizabeth Ferry (Anthropology) - In July 2013, Elizabeth Ferry’s book Minerals, Collecting and Value across the U.S.-Mexican border was published by Indiana University Press. In December 2013 she will travel to Mompox, Colombia to observe and document the production of gold filigree. This research trip is part of a book project with her brother, the photojournalist Stephen Ferry, documenting various aspects of gold production in Colombia.

Faith Smith (AAAS, English) - attended the 2013 meeting of the Caribbean Studies Association meeting in Georgetown, Grenada. She presented a paper entitled “Good Enough for Booker T to Kiss: Tuskegee and the Caribbean,” on the panel “Development and Its After-life: The Longue Durée of Slavery.”

Charles Golden (Anthropology) - Following the close of his archaeological season, Charles worked with collaborators in Merida, Yucatan at the Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan to participate in materials analysis of ceramics recovered in the course of excavation, as well as visited archaeological sites in the Yucatan peninsula.

Javier Urcid (Anthropology) - conducted archaeological research and reconnaissance in Oaxaca and Puebla. He documented stone monuments carved with hieroglyphic inscriptions. Javier also delivered a presentation to the community of Cuquila in the Mixteca Alta. Finally, he continued research among the Archivo de Monumentos Prehispánicos and the Fototeca Nacional.

Fernando Rosenberg (Romance Studies) - traveled to Uruguay where he gave the keynote for the Montevideana conference at the Universidad de Montevideo. He travelled to Argentina and continued his research toward a book project on notions of justice in contemporary visual and literary artistic production.

The program’s first director, Professor emeritus Milton Vanger, who went on to lead the program for 20 years, proposed the LAS concentration to the faculty in the Spring of 1963, and the major was approved after lively faculty debate. Some faculty, like renowned Professor Herbert Marcuse, regarded these programs as a way to promote a CIA agenda. But the program was approved, and although it has been and continues to be a small program, its contribution to Brandeis’ life has been enormous. Today, as Latin America becomes one of the fastest growing, and I would say one of the most democratic and progressive, regions in the world, and when the Hispanic population of the U.S. has become the fastest growing minority, the need to pay renewed attention to the region has taken on a new significance. Our own program changed its name to Latin American and Latino Studies in 2005, thus recognizing the growing presence of a Latino student population at Brandeis and the need to make room for a consistent curricular offerings in Latino Studies. Our program has been ahead of the curve in other initiatives, like for example advancing experiential and community engaged learning, an initiative that is now central to Brandeis’s educational mission, and doing so by reaching to the active Latino organizations in our own city of Waltham.

When I emailed our guest speakers-alumni Dr. Frances Hagopian (Department of Government, Harvard University) Peter Kornbluh (National Security Archives), and Jeff Arak (independent filmmaker), in order to invite them to be the feature panelists in our anniversary celebration,
the three of them responded immediately. They were happy to come back to their alma mater and share their experience with our students, friends, and faculty. Over the years, the line-up of intellectuals, academics and artists who have visited Brandeis under the auspices of our program is impressive. Every year a number of Brandeis’ students both undergraduate and graduate are able to travel and conduct research and internships in Latin America with the support of our Jane’s travel grants, experiences which for most of them constitutes a high point of their Brandeis education. All this wouldn’t have been possible without the generous financial contribution of our donors, who support these bi-annual travel grants, as well as our essay prize, the newly launched photography prize, and a myriad of events, which we are able to sponsor as a result of their generosity. This support extends to the endowed Jane’s Chair in Latin American Studies, which, until this year, has been filled with incomparable energy and intellectual integrity by Professor Silvia Arrom, who is retiring this semester. Thanks to our donors, our program is something of a small wonder.

Alumni Notes

Mary G. Berg presented a paper “Periodismo y ficción en Aves sin nindo de Clorinda Matto de Turner” at LASA 2013.

Alex Green ’04 will enter the Harvard Kennedy School of Government for a mid-career MPA. Green is currently a researcher at the Harvard Program on Negotiation.

Kendra Harrison ’07 has been a Spanish teacher at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School for the last 5 years. This past year she also started teaching as an adjunct at the community college level. She volunteers as a Big Sister in the Boston area and has been involved in Sibling Connections, an organization that seeks to reunite siblings who have been separated through foster care through weekend activities and summer camp. She continues her work with the children's home in the Dominican Republic and has recently developed a website: hogarforchildren.org.

Zamira Castro Jimenez ’11 recently moved to Miami to pursue a Masters in Mental Health Counseling at University
of Miami as well as a graduate certificate in Latino Mental Health Counseling to render services in Spanish.

**Frances Hagopian ’75** has a forthcoming book *Reorganizing Political Representation in Latin America: Parties, Program, and Patronage in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico.*

**Peter Kornbluh ’78** is co-authoring a forthcoming book on the untold history of dialogue between the United States and Cuba.

**Peggy Levitt** is currently the Visiting International Fellow in the Dept. of Cultural Anthropology at the Vrije University in Amsterdam.

**Laura Limonic ’97** is finishing up a PhD in Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center with research on Jewish Latinos in the United States. In September 2013 she joined the department of Sociology at SUNY Old Westbury.

**Lara Newman (Rosenwasser) ’09** recently graduated medical school from Penn State in May 2013. She is completing an internship in Internal Medicine and a residency in Ophthalmology, both at the University of Louisville. Lara and Daniel Newman got married on 5/26/13.

**Daniel Newman ’09** worked for the Spanish American Civic Association in Lancaster, PA for one year post graduation, then returned to school at Millersville University for his post-bac in secondary education. He will be teaching high school Spanish at New Albany High School in New Albany, Indiana as well as pursuing his Master’s in Spanish at the University of Louisville.

**Sergio Reyes ’98** is now the Communications Director / Press Secretary for the California Senate Majority Leader in Sacramento, CA.

**Yaser Robles ’03** completed his PhD in Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies at SUNY Albany.


**Kathrin Seidl** presented a paper “The Arbitrariness of Persecution: The Face of (Un)Suspected Nazis in Colombia during and after WWII” at LASA 2013.

**Leah Smith ’13** will spend this coming year in Haiti as an American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) Jewish Service Corps Fellow, working with JDC’s partner organization ProDev (Progress and Development Through the Youth of Haiti Foundation). Her role with ProDev will be split between their office in Port-Au-Prince, where she will assist with grant-writing, and one of their schools on Zoranje, where she implement informal education programs for the children and the wider community.
Q & A with Silvia Arrom
Jane’s Professor of Latin American & Latino Studies
Department of History

-Tell us a little about your professional history, and particularly at Brandeis.

SA: I have been teaching Latin American History for 35 years, 22 of them at Brandeis. There are many things I have loved about being here: the enthusiastic and intelligent students, my wonderful colleagues, the large network of Latin Americanists in the Boston area.

-How has LALS evolved since you arrived?

SA: My greatest pleasure was directing LALS for fourteen years, from 1991 to 2005, because when I arrived in 1991 the program was moribund, despite being Brandeis’ first interdisciplinary program. Fortunately, we got the support of generous donors who wanted Brandeis to have a vibrant Latin American studies program. They funded the Jane’s Chair in Latin American Studies, which was the first endowed professorship at Brandeis in an interdisciplinary field, which I have been honored to hold. And they provided additional support so we can do what few interdisciplinary programs can do: awarding travel grants and academic prizes to students and research grants to faculty, sponsoring many co-curricular events, and contributing to Brandeis in numerous ways. Together with the faculty, students, and donors, we built a gem of a program that I am very proud of.

-What drew to Latin America as a field of studies originally?

SA: My parents were Cuban, so I had a personal interest there. We went to Cuba every year until 1961, when relations were broken. But Latin America wasn’t taught at that time, there were Latin American Studies majors in the U.S., and not even a Latin American history classes at Bryn Mawr. I had to petition to have a seminar, and the Dean of the college, Mary... who wasn’t a Latin Americanist but taught that class about travel literature in Mexico.

-And how about your decision to study Mexico?

SA: It was just impossible to be a Cuban scholar after 1961, no possibility of doing archival research from the U.S. Also, you had to take sides: to be for or against the Revolution. And I couldn’t be a hundred percent pro any side. It’s got better, but it was very polarized; the pro-Revolution and anti-Revolution scholars. I was going to do Chile, I was there right before the coup of 1973. My plane stopped in Mexico when I was going back to Stanford from Chile, and I decided to explore a second possibility, because things in Chile got very bad after the coup. So I became a Mexicanist.

-What are the changes that have occurred since you started in the U.S. academy that affected your field of studies?
Q & A with Silvia Arrom, cont’d.

SA: When I started in 1971, there were all these dictatorships in Latin America, so Latin Americanists were quite left-wing, passionately, militantly interested in what was happening. That brought us together in a way that we don’t have anymore. Thank goodness we don’t have any military dictatorship. There was also the romantization of Revolution and violence, which I have been critical of so I couldn’t accept it. We don’t have that anymore, which is a good thing; pragmatism can be a good thing. And the biggest change is that we now study the Latin American diaspora in the U.S. in the field of Latin American Studies. Many people trained as Latin Americanist are studying Latinos in the U.S. That shift recognizes our growing interdependence.

At Brandeis we taught our first interdisciplinary seminar on Latinos in the year 2000s. And it was one of the earliest ones in the U.S. to teach all Latinos together and not just Cubans, Puerto Ricans or Mexicans, etc. A few years later, in 2005 we change our name from LAS to LALS, in recognition of the shift in the field, in recognition of the interest of our students—not only Latino students wanting to learn from their own background, but non-Latino students wanting to be culturally literate. This will become more important at Brandeis in the coming years, because it leads us on subjects that are cutting-edge, like transnationalism and the creation of a Pan-Latin identity, among others. So, I am optimistic that the program will continue to thrive at Brandeis. And I know I leave it in very good hands.

“Together with the faculty, students, and donors, we built a gem of a program that I am very proud of.”
Jane’s Essay Prize and Travel Grants

Jane’s Essay Prize Recipients

**Leah Smith ’13** – “Potent Minds and Sterile Bodies: Desire, Decisions and Reproductive Agency Amongst Surgically Sterilized, Low-Income Women in Salvador, Brazil”

**Marc Alsina ’13** – “Argentine Political Law and the Recurring Breakdown of Democracy”

Jane’s Travel Grant Recipients

**Jemima Barrios, IGS and Business Double Major** – “Tourism and Microfinance: Improving the Economic Conditions of Locals in Puerto Vallarta”

**Ryan Collins, PhD Anthropology** – “Complex Foundations: Preliminary Research into Yaxuna’s Preclassic E-Group Assemblage”

**Mollie Kravitz, LALS Major, Anthropology and IGS minors** - “Latino Immigration Internship Project in Miami, Florida”

**Adam Gamwell, PhD Anthropology** - “From Mother Tongue to Pachamama: Summer Quechua Intensive in Cuzco, Peru”

Thank you to the committee members – Jane’s Essay Prize Silvia Arrom, Fernando Rosenberg, and Christina Espinosa; for Fall 2012 Jane’s Travel Grant Fernando Rosenberg, Javier Urcid, and Elizabeth Ferry; for Jane’s Travel Grant Summer 2013 Faith Smith, Lucia Reyes, and Charles Golden

Thank our very generous Friends of the LALS Program for their support – they make possible our Travel Grants, Essay Prize, Faculty Development Awards, and the day-to-day operation of the Program. Thank you to our great UDRs this year Allyson Cartter, Caroline Duchin, and Laura Aguirre. We look forward to working with our new UDRs for 2013-2014, Jacob Lurie and Mollie Kravitz (Spring 2014)
### Fall 2013
- **AAAS125B** Caribbean Women and Globalization: Sexuality, Citizenship, Work - Smith  
- **AAAS126B** Political Economy of the third World - Nyangoni  
- **ANTH55A** Anthropology of Development - Tankha  
- **ANTH153A** Writing Systems and Scribal Traditions - Urcid  
- **ANTH168A** The Maya: Past, Present and Future - Golden  
- **FA160A** Global Surrealisms - Cole  
- **HISP111B** Introduction to Latin American Literature and Culture - Arellano  
- **HISP160A** Culture and Social Change in Latin America - Rosenberg  
- **HISP196A** Topics: Latin@ Fictions of Detection - Mandrell  
- **HIST 71A** Empire and Its Discontents: Latin America from Conquest to Independence - Fernandez  
- **POL144A** Latin American Politics I - Hindley

### Spring 2013
- **AAAS133B** The Literature of the Caribbean - Smith  
- **ANTH147B** Mesoamerican Civilizations and Their Legacies - Urcid  
- **ENG107A** Women Writing Desire: Caribbean Fiction and Film - Smith  
- **HISP108A** Spanish for Heritage Students - Reyes de Deu  
- **HISP111A** Introduction to Latin American Literature and Culture - Rosenberg  
- **HISP164A** Studies in Latin American Literature - Rosenberg  
- **HIST71B** Latin American History, 1870 to the Present - Fernandez  
- **HIST171B** Latinos in the U.S. - Lopez  
- **IGS170A** The Rise of Brazil - Lino e Silva  
- **Pol128A** The Politics of Revolution: State Violence and Popular Insurgency in the Third World - Thaxton  
- **POL144B** Latin American Politics II - Hindley  
- **SOC122A** The Sociology of American Immigration - Lucken