Latin American Studies is thriving on the eve of the millennium, with dedicated students and faculty and large course enrollments. This past year was an active one, with numerous events highlighting the visibility of Latin America on campus. Particularly gratifying were the fascinating reports by students who traveled to Latin America last summer. Three more set off this summer for Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, and Argentina.

This fall two new faculty members join us, Mireya Solís in Politics and Javier Urcid in Anthropology. The program is poised to grow even more in the coming decade as the Latino presence in the U.S. expands and as Brandeis continues to strengthen its ties to Latin America.

During the spring semester I took a sabbatical leave to complete my book on Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774-1871. I thank Donald Hindley, Acting Director, and Marilyn Brooks, Administrator, for running the program smoothly in my absence. With the book now in the hands of Duke University Press, I return with renewed vigor.

I look forward to working with all of you in the coming year to enhance Latin American Studies at Brandeis.

Silvia Marina Arrom
LAS EVENTS AT BRANDEIS, 1998-99

The following events were sponsored or co-sponsored by the Latin American Studies program:

Lectures:


NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF AFRICAN PEOPLE (TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO): “Africans in Trinidad and Tobago,” October 22.


ACHY OBEJAS (Cuban-American author): reading from her work We Came All the Way From Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?, November 2.


DAVID BARKIN (professor, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico): “Responses to Mexico’s Crisis: From the Centers of World Power to the Grass Roots,” December 3.


Concert:

SOL Y CANTO musical group, September 25.

Symposia:

WOMEN AND SPIRITUALITY, lectures and art exhibit, co-sponsored with Fine Arts, Women’s Studies, and the Helmsley Fund, in conjunction with a month-long exhibit of the works of Deborah Huacuja, Mexican-American artist, Dreitzer Gallery, February 2.

Mexican Film Series:


DEATH OF A BUREAUCRAT, October 1.

LA ROSA BLANCA, October 13.

ROJO AMANECER, November 15.

LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE, December 8.

BOSTON AREA CONSORTIUM ON LATIN AMERICA SPONSORS FIVE SEMINARS

The Boston Area Consortium on Latin America was headquartered at Brandeis for the eighth consecutive year. It consists of nine colleges and universities in metropolitan Boston and serves as a means for faculty and students with interests in this area to communicate with each other, to find out about events at other institutions, and to supplement their own resources with those available at other locations.

During 1998-99 BACLA sponsored the following faculty seminars, which were free and open to the public:

“PINOCHET AND HISTORY: RETURN OF THE REPRESSED,” Peter Winn (History, Tufts), Marguerite Feitlowitz (Expository Writing, Harvard), and Peter Rosenblum (Human Rights, Harvard Law School), December 1.


“REBELLION IN CHIAPAS,” Carlos Tello Diaz (Mexican author), Maria del Carmen Legorreta Diaz (Mexican author), and John Womack, Jr. (History and Economics, Harvard), May 3.

SINGERMAN WINS 1999 JANE’S PRIZE

Benjamin Singerman ’99 was awarded this year’s Jane’s Essay Prize for “The Amazon Worlds Story.” The prize is given to an undergraduate for the best paper in any area of Latin American or Caribbean studies. He completed the research for his senior thesis last summer at the Amazon Worlds Museum in Ecuador, where he worked as an intern in cultural tourism and sustainable development.

Homer0 Castanier, Sharen Bidaisee, and Benjamin Singerman receiving awards at the LAS luncheon. (Photo by Julian Brown, Brandeis Public Affairs Office)

JANE’S TRAVEL GRANTS RECIPIENTS

One undergraduate and two graduate students were the winners of this year’s Jane’s Travel Grants to fund research in Latin America. Sharen Bidaisee ’99 is doing research on “Making Art in Trinidad and Tobago,” and Katerina Ailova (Anthropology) travels to Mexico to study “The Power of Tradition: Festival and Religious Imagery in Oaxaca, Mexico.” Homer0 Castanier (SID) has completed his travels and research in Guatemala on “Evaluación económica del área de protección especial Punta de Manabique.”

Ms. Bidaisee and Ms. Ailova will present the findings of their research to the LAS faculty and students this fall. Mr. Castanier spoke to the LAS community in April.

WILLIAMS RECEIVES FACULTY GRANT

Dessima Williams, assistant professor of Sociology, was awarded this year’s Jane’s Faculty Research Grant to help support her study on “Women Leaders and Transformation in the Developing Countries.” She will travel to Dominica, Grenada, and Curaçao.

NEW FACULTY MEMBERS JOIN LAS

Two Mexican scholars will join the Latin American Studies program faculty and committee this semester. We are pleased to welcome them to Brandeis.

Professor Mireya Solís (Politics) received her Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1998. Her dissertation was “Exporting Losers?: The Political Economy of Japanese Foreign Direct Investment.” Her research interests are international political economy, international relations, and comparative political economy.

Professor Javier Urcid (Anthropology), received his doctorate in 1992 from Yale University. His dissertation was “Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing.” He is the recipient of numerous teaching grants and has done extensive field work in various areas of Mexico. Professor Urcid is the author of more than two dozen articles in his field.

SID DIRECTOR ADDED TO FACULTY

Professor Laurence Simon (SID) has joined the LAS faculty and its advisory committee. He is the institute director of the Brandeis Institute for Sustainable International Development and an economic geographer specializing in regional planning. He has been a director at Oxfam and an advisor to the United Nations Development Programme and World Bank on poverty alleviation. He has done fieldwork in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Haiti, Cuba, and Jamaica, among other countries.

JANE’S TRAVEL GRANT WINNERS GIVE PRESENTATIONS, INTERVIEWS

Gabrielle Dickerman ’99, Yasmin Howes ’99, and Andrew Levine ’98 were recipients of last year’s Jane’s Travel Grants. All had interesting, rewarding experiences during their time abroad.

Gabrielle Dickerman spent five weeks in Honduras researching its Jewish community. Her family, who immigrated there from Europe two generations ago, still
Wendi Adelson '01, a 1999 Ethics and Coexistence Fellow, is spending the summer in Buenos Aires, Argentina, working with La Línea Fundadora de Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo. She is conducting interviews with families of those who disappeared during the military dictatorship.

Benjamin Singerman ‘99 was awarded a Fulbright Student Award for the 1999-2000 academic year. His project, entitled “Cooperation in Development of the Ecuadorian Amazon,” will examine the evolving relationship between indigenous federations and non-governmental organizations working in the Ecuadorian Amazon to promote economic development, environmental preservation, and cultural revalorization.

Rebecca Smith ’99 entered the Peace Corps in El Salvador. She will be working on an agricultural education/extension assignment. She plans to apply to graduate programs after completing her tour there.

LATIN AMERICAN DISSERTATIONS AND SENIOR TESIS


HONORS, AWARDS TO LAS STUDENTS

Christine Aragón De León, cum laude, Martin Luther King Scholar, McNair Scholar, Maurice I. Shaer Memorial Prize for an outstanding student on financial aid; Vanya Green, cum laude, Justice Brandeis scholar; Janice Lorde, cum laude, Bruce R. Mayper Memorial Award; Elsa Silva, cum laude; Suzi Silva, cum laude; Jessica Miller, magna cum laude; Justice Brandeis Scholar; Emily Richman, magna cum laude, Justice Brandeis Scholar; Rebecca Smith, magna cum laude; McNair Scholar; Damian Payiatakis, summa cum laude with high honors in Economics, Justice Brandeis Scholar, Brandeis University Scholar, Sachar Scholarship, Morris and Anna Feldberg Prize in Economics, Phi Beta Kappa; Jason Schweitzer, summa cum laude with honors in Anthropology, Justice Brandeis Scholar, Betty and Harry S. Shapiro Award for an outstanding scholar in Anthropology, Phi Beta Kappa; Benjamin Singerman, summa cum laude with highest honors in History and
LATIN AMERICAN FACULTY NOTES

Silvia Arrom (History) organized a session on “Cuba in Transition” at the October meeting of the New England Council of Latin American Studies and participated in sessions of the American Historical Association in January and the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women in June. She joined the editorial board of the Mexican periodical *Signos*. She continued as director of BACLA and as an affiliate of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard.

Roxanne Dávila (ROCL) presented “La nostalgia y el discurso urbano: Una aproximación a Las batallas en el desierto de Jose Emilio Pacheco,” at the Congreso de Literatura Mexicana in March.

Dora Older (ROCL) mentored Wendy Adelson, an Ethics Center Student Fellow, in preparation for her summer research trip to Argentina. Professor Older is the advisor to AHORA, the Hispanic Club.

Angela Maria Pérez (ROCL) was awarded the Mazer Faculty Grant for her project “The Buccaneers in the Darien Region” and did research in Seville on this topic at the Archive de Indias. She also received a grant to develop a graduate course on women in Latin America, which she will co-teach as part of the Radcliffe Consortium on Women’s Studies next spring.

Faith Smith (English/AAAS) was the recipient of the Marver and Sheva Bernstein Faculty Fellowship for 1998. She delivered the paper “Gentlemen and Jamettes: Creole Speech in 19th-Century Trinidad” at Tulane University in January and chaired a panel entitled “Women and Popular Culture” at the Caribbean Studies Association meeting in Panama in May. She edited a special issue of *Small Axe* on the topic “Genders and Sexualities.” She spent the past academic year at the Center for Historical Analysis at Rutgers University.

Dessima Williams (Sociology) is the advisor of the Caribbean Students Association and member of the board of the Brandeis Intercultural Center. Professor Williams was a recipient of the 1998 United Nations Association of Greater Boston’s Leadership Award for the promotion of international understanding and human rights and the Martin H. Perlmutter Award for Teaching Excellence at Brandeis.


HURRICANE, EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS AIDED BY BRANDEIS STUDENTS

The Brandeis community demonstrated its support for victims of Hurricane Mitch, the November 1998 storm that struck Central America, and the Colombian earthquake which devastated the coffee-growing region of that country in January.

Daniel Losk ‘99 and Christina DeLeón ‘99 organized the November Actos de Solaridad event, part of the Hurricane Mitch Relief Campaign. Faculty members described the devastation that followed the storm, especially in Honduras and Nicaragua. Speakers included Professors Silvia Arrom (History), Roxanne Dávila (ROCL), Angela Perez (ROCL), and Dessima Williams (Sociology). Donations of money, food, clothing, and health-related goods were collected and sent to Oxfam America.

“Solidarity with Colombia Day” was held in February, bringing members of the university’s faculty and student body together to aid earthquake victims. Professor Perez helped organize the event; funds and clothing donated went to various Colombian relief agencies.

STUDENTS CELEBRATE CARIBBEAN, LATIN AMERICAN CULTURES

The second annual Hispanic Heritage Month ran from September 15 to October 15, sponsored by AHORA!, the university’s Latin American student group. The theme was “Our Past, Our Presence, Our Future.” Events included a reading by Costa Rican writer and critic Rima de Vallbona, a Latin Jazz Cafe, the Sol y Canto band, and the documentary “Courageous Women of Colombia.”

The first week of March highlighted the influence and interests of Caribbean students on campus. “Caribbean Week 1999” included panels on African-American/Caribbean Relations and Political Issues and Reform in Haiti, a Caribbean cultural fest, and a talent showcase.
COURSE ON LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN TO BE OFFERED IN FALL SEMESTER

Professor Silvia Arrom (History) will introduce a new course, History 173b, “Latin American Women: Historical Perspectives.” The seminar is designed to provide a broad overview of Latin American women’s history from the 16th to the 20th centuries. It seeks to replace the stereotype of the passive and subjected Latin American woman with an appreciation of the historical diversity of women of different races and classes in different times and places. It also explores the methodological problems involved in understanding women’s experiences in the past.

ALUMNI NOTES

Carlos Baia ’94 is completing his second masters in public administration at the University of Florida. He was a recipient of the B. Harold Farmer Scholarship for his research into local and city government in Florida.

Larissa Ruiz Baia ’94 was chosen as a national training fellow by Brooklyn College’s Office of Research for Religion in Society and Culture for a national study on religion among Latinos in the U.S. Her paper, “Rethinking Transnationalism: Reconstructing National Identities Among Peruvian Catholic Immigrants in New Jersey” was accepted for publication by the Journal of Intercultural Studies and World Affairs.

Ramon Barquin ’96 is attending law school and is the senior public policy consultant for the Puerto Rico Institute of Strategic Studies.

Kim Coughlin ’85 teaches math and science to ESL elementary students and is also the ESL coordinator in Van Nuys, CA. She recently received her M.A. in Marriage and Family Counseling.

Matthew Freeman ’97 was the U.S. travel operations coordinator for American Field Service Intercultural Programs USA. He will begin a master’s program in Health Policy at Yale University in September.

Susannah Glusker ’62 received a grant from the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture to edit and annotate Anita Brenner’s journals from 1925-1930. Ms. Glusker is the author of a monthly column for the online publication “Mexis” at www.mexis.com.mx.

Adam Greenwald ’98 is assistant director of alumni relations in the office of development at Brandeis.

Donna Guy ’67 was a member of a roundtable discussion on “Gender Analysis and the Transformation of Political History” at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women in June.

Temma Kaplan ’64 spoke on “Leadership and Grassroots Activism in Latin America” at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women in June.

David Quil Lawrence ’94 is a reporter in Colombia. He covered the country’s earthquake, drug wars, and peace talks this year for National Public Radio.

Clara Lida ’63 is a professor at el Colegio de México, Mexico City, and a National Research Fellow at the Sistema Nacional de Investigadores, Mexico. She is the co-author of Españay el imperio de Maximiliano (1999).

Karen Martin ’97 is a volunteer with the October 22nd Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression, and the Criminalization of a Generation, the Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, and Reclaim the Streets. She lives in San Francisco.


Ly-Minh Pham ’95 has been accepted to the master’s program in industrial/organizational psychology at Montana State University beginning in September.

Sergio Reyes ’98 enters the Ph.D. program in Political Science at the University of Chicago this fall.


Aileen Walborsky-Josephs ’86 is an attorney in West Palm Beach, FL, with a specialty in immigration law.
LAS PROGRAM GRADUATES TWELVE

The Latin American Studies Program graduated one dozen students this year. Our congratulations to them all and our best wishes for their continued success. The majors (concentrators) are:
- Christine Aragon DeLeon - additional major in Sociology and program in Education;
- Vanya Green - additional independent major in Neuro-Anthropology;
- Jason Schweitzer - additional major in Anthropology;
- Benjamin Singerman - additional major in History;

The minors (programs) are:
- Jeannette German - major in Psychology and program in Education;
- Janice Lorde - major in Politics;
- Jessica Miller - major in Politics;
- Damian Payiatakis - major in Economics;
- Emily Richman - major in History, additional minors in Spanish and Legal Studies;
- Elsa Silva - major in Politics, additional minor in Economics;
- Suzi Silva - major in Politics, additional minor in Economics;
- Rebecca Smith - major in History.

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES COMMITTEE

The following faculty members helped guide the Latin American Studies Program this year. They also served as advisers for students interested in their fields of expertise: Silvia Arrom (History), Lynette Bosch (Fine Arts), Roxanne Davila (ROCL), Donald Hindley (Politics), Robert Hunt ( Anthropology), James Mandrell (ROCL), Ricardo Morant (Psychology), Wellington Nyangoni (AAAS), Dora Older (ROCL), Angela Perez (ROCL), Benson Saler (Anthropology), Faith Smith (English), Dessima Williams (Sociology), Luis Yglesias (ROCL), Robert Zeitlin (Anthropology).

ITEMS FOR MILLENIUM NEWSLETTER

Don’t miss the opportunity of seeing your name in print in the LAS newsletter in the year 2000! Please let us know what’s been happening in your professional lives. Contact Marilyn Brooks, administrator of Latin American Studies via e-mail: Mbrooks@brandeis.edu; fax 781-736-2273; our web page at www.brandeis.edu/departments/latinam; snail mail at LAS/MS 036, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02454.

Faculty, students, and friends at the Latin American Studies luncheon on May 5.
(Photo by Julian Brown, Brandeis Public Affairs Office)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTH 55a</td>
<td>Development and the Third World</td>
<td>Hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIST 175a</td>
<td>The Making and Unmaking of the Mexican Revolution</td>
<td>Arrom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAS 98a</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
<td>Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>POL 144a</td>
<td>Latin American Politics I</td>
<td>Hindley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL 151b</td>
<td>Seminar: Nationalism and Development</td>
<td>Morgenthal</td>
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<tr>
<td>SECS 169a</td>
<td>Columbus: Encounters and Inventions</td>
<td>Perez</td>
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<td>SOC 107a</td>
<td>Global Apartheid and Social Movements</td>
<td>Williams</td>
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<td>SOC 171a</td>
<td>Women Leaders and Transformation in Developing Countries</td>
<td>Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 111b</td>
<td>Introduction to Latin American Literature</td>
<td>Perez</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 164b</td>
<td>Power, Marginality, and the Latin American City</td>
<td>Davila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPAN 192a</td>
<td>Hispanic Women’s Fiction</td>
<td>Mandrell</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAAS 117a</td>
<td>Communications and Social Change in Developing Nations</td>
<td>Berhame-Selassie</td>
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<tr>
<td>AAAS 126b</td>
<td>Political Economy of the Third World</td>
<td>Nyangoni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAAS 167a</td>
<td>African and Caribbean Comparative Political Systems</td>
<td>Nyangoni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAS 98a</td>
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<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
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<td>Revolutions in the Third World</td>
<td>Hindley</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Introduction to Latin American Literature</td>
<td>Perez</td>
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<td>Studies in Latin American Literature/Humor in Latin American Literature</td>
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