



SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

MACLAS  
 Middle  
 Atlantic  
 Council of  
 Latin American  
 Studies  
  
 March 2021

Message from the President

León Arredondo (2020-2021)

Dear MACLAS members,

We are thrilled to be approaching our 2021 conference and entering the fifth decade of MACLAS history and contributions to Latin American Studies!

Conducting this year’s and last year’s conferences in a virtual format has created a series of challenges, but also some opportunities. I am glad to report that the 2021 conference will include presenters from Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Canada and the U.K., a live artistic performance from Medellín, and the participation of many graduate and undergraduate students. To everyone who is participating in MACLAS for the first time, I hope that this is just the beginning of your continued membership and involvement with the association.

We have an exciting program with a wide range of interesting papers. Several presentations directly engage with the theme of the conference and examine *uncertain times* in the contexts of literary criticism and the COVID-19 pandemic. Other topics include the Ottoman telenovela invasion of Latin America, oranges and changing landscapes, early colonial Mexico, Afro-descendants’ memory and visibility, conspiracies and elections, and many more in areas such as film studies, human rights and social movements.

Dr. John Stolle-McAllister, winner of the 2020 Whitaker Prize, will be the keynote speaker. Please see inside for additional details on Dr. Stolle-McAllister, the artistic performance, and the latest MARLAS update.

Looking forward to seeing you soon!

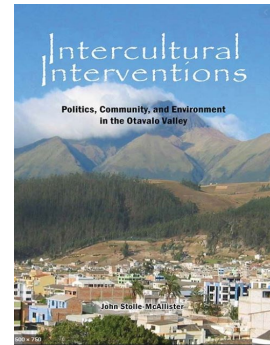
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## Keynote Speaker: Dr. John Stolle-McAllister

**Saturday March 20, 2:00pm**

Dr. John Stolle-McAllister is the winner of the 2020 Arthur P. Whitaker Prize. Dr. McAllister won the prize for his book, *Intercultural Interventions: Politics, Community, and Environment in the Otavalo Valley* (2020). The text analyzes the changing political and social climate of Ecuador, specifically the Otavalo Valley of the Northern Sierra, and its impact on indigenous populations within the country. The period of change, which is the result of the indigenous movement of the late 20th to early 21st centuries, created a need for the indigenous populations to adapt to a new normal. The book focuses on the decade from 2006 to 2016, a period of great political, cultural, and social change, which prompted indigenous groups into mobilization and negotiations with other indigenous groups in order to fight for rights for their land, their political participation, their autonomy, and their cultural differences. The movement demanded intercultural relationships founded upon respect, coexistence, mutual learning, and equality with the goal of societal growth. The movement noted the importance of the acknowledgement that the foundations of the relationships between these different cultures was rooted in inequality, therefore the movement warranted multifaceted transformation.



### Arlequin y los Juglares:

Established in Medellín in 1972, Arlequin y los Juglares is a theater company that works alongside social, cultural, human rights and community organizations to strengthen grassroots organizing initiatives. Its mission is to contribute to the construction of a democratic, equitable and just society. Arlequin y los Juglares places emphasis on working on research and creativity in relation to popular cultures, brings together theater, puppetry, music, trova, storytelling, poetry and pantomime, and has as one of its primary goals the engagement of children and youth.

### Vengo del viento

**Friday March 19, 5:20pm**

Arlequin y los Juglares will perform Vengo del Viento, a theatrical performance of poems by various authors. Dramaturgical elements and music are integrated to bring the text and experiences from multiple regions to life. The performance includes works by author such as Ana María Iza (Ecuador), Bertalicia Peralta (Panamá), Bertol Brecht (Alemania), Epifanio Mejía (Colombia), Gioconda Belli (Nicaragua), Magda Portal (Perú), Matilde Espinoza (Colombia), Mercedes Durán (El Salvador), Miguel Hernández (España), and Nicolás Guillén (Cuba).



## Teaching, Learning and Working during COVID-19 Times: Part One

### Austerity at Ithaca College

Patricia Rodriguez

As many of you have probably heard, Ithaca College (as well as other universities and colleges in the area) has announced a significant restructuring due to falling student enrollment (and the projected trend toward lower number of students applying for college nation-wide). The college administration decided preemptively to target a ‘more sustainable’ 5,000 student size and a 12:1 student ratio, alleging that decisions made by previous administrators had bloated the number of faculty, and that made the current adjustments necessary as part of strategic planning. The decision to undergo an Academic Program Prioritization (APP) had been made before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, so the announcement of cuts to a whole of 116 full-time equivalent faculty positions alongside the layoffs and furloughs of hundreds of staff positions already implemented during 2020, have certainly exacerbated anxieties among IC faculty, staff, students and alumni. A ‘Shape of the College’ recommendation document that was put together by an implementation committee that included no faculty members has now been approved by the President (Dr. Shirley Colorado) and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Dr. La Jerne Cornish). The cuts (figured out based on the procedures in the Faculty Handbook) supposedly are to be done while still signifying a commitment to excellence, attention to student experiences, and being an employer of choice.

However, what many are seeing on the ground is that bringing an end to departments and firing many of the most vulnerable contingent and non-tenured faculty seemingly in the name of preserving tenure creates negative ripple effects. One of the results is that current students are starting to question staying at IC, where tuition, room & board, and meals amount to more than \$60K/year (average, excluding the discounts), and curricular and extracurricular options are diminished. Many alumni are expressing deep concern with decisions, students, alumni and faculty are mobilizing and calling for full transparency in accounting, and many faculty are increasing questioning the administration’s true commitment to the college’s stated values and missions, and their insistence that cuts need to be announced immediately, even as the college is not in financial exigency. Some BIPOC faculty are concerned that other faculty are not treating the administrators in a just way, citing concerns with racism and sexism. Divisions are certainly present and perhaps deepening as the process unfolds.

Solidarity among faculty, students, alumni and some staff has emerged as well, and faculty are expressing a desire to change the structure of decision-making at the college, as is evidenced for instance in the creation of an AAUP (American Association of University Professors) chapter. Perhaps an important movement toward cross-institutional solidarity might be a next step, as austerity decisions are not something affecting only IC, but so many other higher education institutions and communities.

## Teaching, Learning and Working during COVID-19 Times: Part Two

### Teaching during Pandemic Times

Ana Moraña

I have been a Spanish professor at Shippensburg University since 2002, where I later became Director of the Ethnic Studies Program. My university is one of the 14 public institutions that form the Pennsylvania System of Higher Education (PASSHE). While at SU I witnessed firsthand how the humanities were being moved to the back burner in the academic world, and the space occupied by language studies was being relentlessly contested. Fortunately, the faculty at Shippensburg and at the PASSHE system have the option of being part of APSCUF, a vibrant and very active union which has been successful in working in defense of faculty and quality education during times of budget cuts.

Exactly one year ago, the pandemic challenged the world, along with our education system, requiring that the faculty and staff adapt their operations to be conducted remotely via zoom. Then, in the majority of the cases, professors shifted to online-teaching, mid-semester spring 2020. And we delivered. The university was incredibly supportive in assisting us through this transition and ensuring that everything required, in order to properly teach online, was provided—from technical support to students, faculty and staff, to hardware, software, training, a 24-hour helpdesk and more. Our colleagues from Instructional Technologies and IT responded tirelessly to our questions and concerns, and provided us with countless hours of instruction via Zoom.

Yet, this was not an easy transition for the students. While the spring term of 2020 had everyone wearily adapting to this ‘new normal’, by fall semester we were all feeling more relaxed, feeling like veterans at the task of online instruction. Teaching and learning online during a pandemic is a story that we will tell our grandchildren and recount in history books, along with the sadness and stress of the illness and death in the world. With this new method of teaching, new challenges showed up: students who, while being *TikTok* wizards, found themselves unable to conduct simple computer

tasks; the difficulty of learning how to keep academic dishonesty out of the online realm; or how to handle situations in which students simply disappear from our classes. As students left their campus housing and returned to their family homes, many found themselves facing difficult home environments, oftentimes lacking the basic technological amenities to continue with their education remotely, or living under economic stress and hardships due to the massive unemployment that resulted from COVID-19, while other students had to deal with the illness itself. Some students had excelled in face-to-face courses, but became quiet in Zoom classes; others complained about depression, or did not complain at all, which oftentimes was even more worrisome. Many had to return to work in order to help support their families, with their schoolwork taking the backseat. There were additional stressors during that time that cannot go ignored, such as growing political unrest and its resulting social tensions, the rise of addiction, and more. We all lived through this, and we all know just how dire things got.

In addition to all of the above, our 14-university PASSHE system is currently undergoing a restructuring process, called System Redesign, which seeks to merge some of our sister universities. Even for those of us who are not faculty at the institutions going through restructuring, it has been a source of stress for everyone within the system, and has required much dialogue and negotiation. As a teacher in Uruguay I had been member of a union since the 1980s, even as it became illegal under dictatorial rule to participate in unions, until 1983. When I joined the faculty at Shippensburg University, I became a union member once again, something that to me was a spruce of pride. Working as a state university educator in the United States has been a constantly evolving experience, sometimes facing disappointments, and others feeling grateful for the doors that have been opened to me, but it has certainly been an experience that has kept me on my toes, as has been teaching during a pandemic—and surviving it. The whole story is like a novel; someone should write it!



## Members and Association News

### Dr. Alejandra Aguilar Dornelles

MACLAS member Dr. Alejandra Aguilar Dornelles has recently accepted a position at Florida Atlantic University, where she teaches courses on Afro-Latin America literature and the African diaspora in Latin America. She has published “De máscaras y demonios: criminalización, heroísmo e identidad racial en El fusilamiento del diablo” in *Visitas al Patio* (Vol. 14, N. 1, 2020). She has also collaborated in the volume *Cantos y poemas: antología crítica de autoras afro-descendientes de América Latina*, edited by María Mercedes Jaramillo and Betty Osorio (Ministerio de Cultura - Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, 2020).



### Dr. Kathy Cunniffe Peña

Kathy Cunniffe Peña, former MACLAS president, was hired in a tenure-track position this spring as Assistant Professor of World Languages at Muskingum University in New Concord, Ohio.

## **MARLAS NEWS** (*Middle Atlantic Review of Latin American Studies*)

- ◆ We are glad to announce that MARLAS just published its special topics issue: Political, Social, and Cultural Upheavals in the COVID-19 Era in Latin America.
- ◆ MARLAS is a biannual peer-reviewed journal published by MACLAS. To access the journal and for submission instructions visit [www.marlasjournal.org](http://www.marlasjournal.org)
- ◆ A big shout out to the MARLAS editorial board on another significant accomplishment and for keeping MARLAS strong as it enters its fifth year!

## POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT:

### Two-Year Postdoctoral Fellowship in Latin American Politics at Carleton College

Carleton College, Department of Political Science, seeks qualified candidates for the Robert A. Oden, Jr. Postdoctoral Fellowship for Innovation in the Liberal Arts, a TWO-YEAR position in comparative politics, to begin September 1, 2021. The candidate must have a Ph.D. in hand (received less than five years ago) by the start-date of the position. Appointment involves half-time research and writing, and half-time teaching for a total of 5 courses over a two-year, six-term period (2-3 courses per year). Candidates must have as a primary focus Latin American politics, but should be prepared to teach one introductory course on comparative politics each year. The successful applicant will teach middle-division courses on Latin American politics and a seminar in their area of scholarship in Latin America. The postdoc will also be expected to engage with Carleton's interdisciplinary program in Latin American Studies.

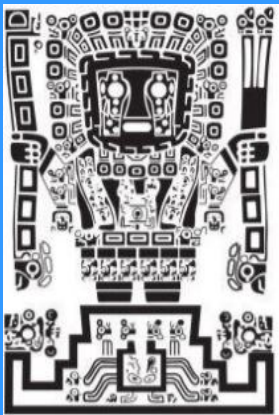
We are particularly interested in candidates who are committed to teaching a diverse student body in a highly selective, liberal arts environment. Carleton College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, veteran status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, status with regard to public assistance, disability, or age in providing employment or access to its educational facilities and activities. We are committed to developing our faculty to better reflect the diversity of our student body and American society. Women and members of underrepresented minority groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

To apply, please visit the Carleton College website [careers.carleton.edu](https://careers.carleton.edu) and submit an online application that includes a cover letter, c.v., one or two sample syllabi, a statement about teaching in an undergraduate liberal arts environment and how you would contribute to a college community that embraces a diversity of people and perspectives as one of its core values, and contact information for three letters of reference. Please send inquiries to Paula Teiken ([pteiken@carleton.edu](mailto:pteiken@carleton.edu)), Political Science Department, Carleton College, Northfield, MN. **The deadline for applications is April 2.**

Carleton is a highly selective liberal arts college with a student body of approximately 2,000. Located in the thriving two-college town of Northfield, Minnesota, it is forty-five miles from the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, in easy reach of a vibrant metropolitan area that is home to three million people and rich cultural resources.

# MACLAS Middle Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies

[www.maclas.org](http://www.maclas.org)



The [Middle Atlantic Council of Latin American Studies](#) is comprised of scholars, researchers, teachers, students, and interested professionals in all disciplines and pursuits from the region comprised of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. MACLAS has as its objectives promoting and developing interest in Latin American Studies and affairs. The organization was founded in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1979.

## MACLAS Executive Council

**2020-2021**

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