Literature and Culture Colloquium Series
Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Fall 2020

Join us on Zoom! 913 1853 4732

October 23, 3:30-4:30
Melissa Dinverno
Curating Literary and Cultural Studies: Scholarship in the Context of the Public Humanities

November 6, 3:30-4:30
Daniel Runnels
A Critique of Anarchist Thought in Latin America: On Violence and Non-Violence

December 4, 3:30-4:30
Andrew Bentley
The Archive as Space and Cultural Artifact in Postwar Guatemala

Each session will include a talk, small group discussion, and Q+A.
Curating Literary and Cultural Studies: Scholarship in the Context of the Public Humanities

Within current conversations on public-facing scholarship in the U.S., in this talk, I look at the act of translating academic work in our field (literary critical studies, cultural criticism, scholarly editions, conference talks, etc.) into other realms and for different publics. We’ll talk about the ways that the research we produce for academic audiences can be shaped into work that impacts public understandings of writers, literature and culture, historical and cultural memory, institutions, and critical categories. I’ll take as a specific point of departure Súites y el viaje de la percepción, a museum exhibit that I recently curated on one of my research areas within Peninsular Studies, Lorca’s avant-garde poetic collection, Súites. I’ll share some of the challenges of recontextualizing that scholarly work for a general public, the different aspects of curation, the varying types of work and methods it required of a literary and cultural scholar, the challenges of working with an interdisciplinary transnational team, and the thrill of creating something from our research both in spatial terms and for a broad international public. Given the Zoom discussion format of the Fall Colloquium, the talk aims to prompt small-group discussion about the translatability of what we do for a general public either in the U.S. or abroad, the wide skill-set that we’ve built in our field, and the need for our work to reach beyond the academy.


This presentation considers the Latin American anarchist archive at the start of the 20th century. Not content with accepting overly simplified characterizations of the movement – neither by the popular imaginary nor by anarchists themselves – I look to writings on violence by anarchist thought leaders to ask what insights can be drawn about debates on ethics, politics, and the relationship between the two.
The Archive as Space and Cultural Artifact in Postwar Guatemala

Andrew Bentley

December 4, 3:30-4:30

The archive is a focal point of culture in postwar Guatemala, imbued with state violence, the politics of memory, and social (in)justice. This presentation combines a spatial analysis of the Historical Archive of the National Police (AHPN) with its literary representation in *El material humano* (2009) to conceptualize the archive as a space and artifact that reconfigures the social imaginary.