The Annual Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Western Regional Conference was held on November 2 & 3 at UCLA.

Our fellows attended the first day of workshops on the first day at the conference. They are given the opportunity to present their work at the conference and to interact with other fellows from across the country. The conference also provides a forum for fellows to discuss and share their research experiences.

One hundred and one fellows from eighteen different colleges presented at the annual MMUF Western Regional Conference including eight UNM fellows on the second day. The participating universities include California Institute of Technology, California State University (CSU) Domingues Hills, CSU Fullerton, CSU, Los Angeles, CSU San Bernardino, University of California, Los Angeles, University of California, Riverside, University of California, Santa Barbara, University of Southern California, and Whittier College.

MMUF Conference Photos

Anna M. NOGAR
Spanish and Portuguese

Irene VASQUEZ
Chicana and Chicano Studies

Kate CARTWRIGHT
Publich Administration

Kencey CORNEJO
Art History

Lindsay SMITH
Geography and Environmental Studies

Marygold WALSH-DILLEY
Honors College

Myra WASHINGTON
Communication and Journalism

Steve BISHOP
Foreign Languages and Literatures

Susanne BAACKMANN
Foreign Languages and Literatures

Tiffany FLORVIL
History

TIMOTEO “TJ” L’ESPERANCE
Major: Political Science
Mentor: Dr. Michael Rocca
Poster Presentation: Healthcare Access for Latinx Immigrants and Their Families in the Albuquerque Area

New Mexico has the largest percentage of Latinx individuals (48% in 2014) of any state in the US. According to the American immigration Council, first-generation immigrants comprise 9.4% of the population of New Mexico, with 70% of them coming from Mexico alone. The current political climate in the US is hostile toward these first-generation Latinx immigrants. Both immigration and race in a contemporary context are issues that have seen a significant number of policy changes in recent years. They intersect in New Mexico often, because there is a confluence of people migrating from Mexico and Latin America as a whole to the US seeking healthcare. The idea that immigrant immigrants have no access to healthcare is unfounded and largely based in racism. Latinx individuals face increased disparities compared to non-Latinx with greater rates of asthma, tuberculosis, obesity, diabetes, infant mortality, and more plague in their communities. These health disparities are often the result of social determinants like the access to income and financial barriers. In this study, I aim to identify what healthcare resources are available to first-generation Latinx immigrants and their families further, whether these resources adequately address the needs of this population and are utilized to a reasonable extent.

ISAIAH ROMO
Major: Latin American Studies
Mentor: Dr. Irene Vasquez
Oral Presentation: Redes Sin Fronteras: Tracing the Transnational Networks of Son Jarocho in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands

My project seeks to understand the growing presence of Son Jarocho music in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands. Son Jarocho is a style of music that originated in the state of Veracruz, on the Gulf coast of Mexico, that has its origins in Mexica, Indigenous, and Spanish musical traditions. I hope to show how the tradition of Son Jarocho has been shaped by the musical networks through which it flows, connecting an increasingly wide transnational community of musicians and music enthusiasts. Using a combination of network analysis, ethnography, oral history, and participant observation, my project seeks to capture the contemporary importance of networks like Abrusqueños, Tijuana, Tlacote, San Felipe, El Paso, and San Diego through individual musicians and actors, social media and technology, and local community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement. I employ the network analysis and community engagement.
Photographic history in US has a capitalistic, colonial, and racist past. In the 19th century most successful image-makers were funded by the government to create propaganda for its imperial projects. The photographers had the intention to further cement the alliance of Manifest Destiny and encouraged the extermination of indigenous humans. I use critical race, performance, and queer theory to analyze the photographic and performances of Laura Aguilar and Nina Fineaut. Both artists are racialized and do not achieve euro-centric standards of beauty and femininity. For Aguilar, whose Crescent (1996) performance in the New Mexico desert conveys the late 19th century photographic spectacles of landscape and exploration therein: vast, and with no depiction of the life that was exterminated in these spaces. In White Shoes (2015), set in Brooklyn, Faustine confronts the landscape built on slavery. About the works, she states “These are the meditation reflections of a history Americans have not come to terms with, challenging the ways through the analysis of these images. I question how the aesthetics of Aguilar and Faustine function to disrupt neo-liberal and colonial conventions of landscape and body, and whether the use of colonial aesthetics can ever disrupt colonial ideas and systems. LIZBETH MISCLES

Major: Art History
Mentors: Dr. Kency Cornejo

Talking Circle: Are all aesthetics violence? An analysis of Laura Aguilar and Nona Faustine’s use of their bodies and landscapes of erasure.

A vowel is a unique sound that is created by the constant flow of air through the vocal tract, the ‘quality’ of this sound is manipulated by the active articulators, including the tongue, the jaw, and the lips. The process of vowel reduction is motivated by both social and phonological factors such as the stress assignment of a word, vowel duration, speech tempo, or speech style. In this project, these motivating factors will be explored, and the physical process of vowel reduction will be determined. It has taken place in the Kukama-Kukamiria language. KK is a highly endangered Amazonian Language that is spoken in Peru. Out of around 1,000 individuals who speak KK, most of them are older than 35 years and are also bilingual in Spanish. Consequently KK is ideal for challenging and changing cross-linguistic research. This project is language and phonological process. Quantitative data will be gathered from interview recordings via Praat, an acoustic analysis software, and word final vowels with those in the post-tonic position so as to illustrate the phonological processes taking place. Qualitative analysis of the results may be conducted to determine what social factors are most relevant to motivating vowel reduction in the respective speech situations.

DAMIAN LOPEZ

Major: Linguistics
Mentors: Dr. Chris Koops

Talking Circle: Vowel Reduction in Kukama-Kukamiria

Epistemic oppression is the exclusion from communities that produce and justify knowledge that damages a group of people. Often, epistemic oppressions are “embodied in the practices and ways of justification that characterize a particular community of knowers. How might one engage with their own way of producing and justifying knowledge in order to better, ameliorate epistemic injustice? In US academic philosophy and those, epistemic injustices are often used to help analyze the interactions between more than one epistemology. While these conceptual schemes seem very useful or even natural, what kind of knowledge might they also falsify? This paper focuses on the specific types of knowledge that philosophers and social scientists produce and the limitations of capturing the urgent epistemological issues. In this paper, I will introduce the epistemic injustice figure in these theories. I suggest that an engagement with the way in which failures partially or do not show up may be engaged in order to produce a better theory of such failures at the institutional level.

SAMUEL SMITH

Major: Philosophy
Mentor: Dr. Ann Murphy

Talking Circle: Epistemic Injustice and the Academic Institution: Languages

Approximately 34 languages become dormant each year. Just in New Mexico alone, there are 12 languages that are classified as endangered, and are at risk of becoming extinct, a state where there are no known speakers. While many studies have been conducted about how heavily these heritage language communities have been trying to increase their membership, most of these conclude that it is a very difficult task. My study investigates how communities on the outside interpret their language endangerment that is happening not too far from where they live and we get the outside community interested in this topic. I am relying on studies that use counterfactual thinking to persuade individuals to change their behavior or adopt a new perspective. I will specifically look into the effect of “counterfactual thinking” on encouraging neighboring community member’s participation in language revitalization efforts. By composing 2 campaign letters, one including counterfactual thinking and one without, I will investigate whether this psychological method can get individuals involved in an issue that does not have immediate implication for the self. This study is important for public policy makers and non-profits who are interested in increasing support for their cause.

SHELBY ZUBIA

Major: Linguistics
Mentor: Dr. Dawn Nordquist

Oral Presentation: “What If?” How Counterfactual Thinking Can Be Used to Campaign for Language Revitalization

Since 1996, the United States government has passed policies that conjure up the need for a physical barrier along the United States-Mexico border. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996, the Real ID Act of 2005 and the Secure Fence Act of 2008 significantly expanded the presence of physical barriers along the border, and they allowed individuals within the government to ignore environmental legislation that would impede the construction of these walls. These laws adversely impacted wildlife, and that ecosystems on which they depend. One study showed that after implementation of the Secure Fence Act, habitat range was decreased by as much 75% for certain species, and this decrease was associated with a higher risk of extinction. Primary ecosystems on which they depend.

THOMAS "TRE" GRAVES

Major: Political Science
Mentor: Dr. Jami Nelson-Nunez

Oral Presentation: Green Political Thought and its Implications for United States Border Policies

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