2017 MMUF WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The UNM & Heritage University MMUF programs hosted the 2017 Western Regional Conference on October 27 & 28 at Sandia and UNM.

One hundred thirteen attendees from ten different colleges gathered to attend workshops that helped prepare them for PhD programs and professorship. The participating universities include California Institute of Technology, Claremont Colleges Consortium, Heritage University, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UC Riverside, UCLA, USC, Whittier College, and UNM.

The Banquet keynote is always a highlight of the MMUF Regional Conference. This year, Dr. Irene Vásquez, the Chair of the Chicana and Chicano Studies at UNM, shared her story of discovering her passion.

The conference was successful thanks to various support from the UNM community. Dr. Julie Coonrod, Dr. Steve Bishop, Dr. Anna Nogar, and Dr. Lorenzo Garcia served in the Faculty Panel held on October 27 at the Sandia Resort. They provided tips and guidance on Graduate School Interviews and Faculty Expectations in Graduate School.

The Junior fellows learned how to manage their time, a critical skill to be a successful scholar, during the workshop provided by the Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS). The Senior fellows worked on their letters of intent for graduate application in the hands-on seminar by the Graduate Resource Center. The fellows also learned the nitty-gritty of the GRE exam by the UNM Continuing Education instructor.

Several PhD students served as facilitators, PhD panelists, and moderators. Student volunteers included Laura Hirrel, Keiko Beers, Jose Bucheli, Brittany Fallon, Jocelyn Gomez, Daejin Kim, Kamela Rasmussen, Kate Rusk and Anthony Rosendo Zarinana.
All eight UNM MMUF fellows presented at the regional conference on October 28. Four of them participated in the 8-minute oral presentation, and the others attended the “Talking Circle” in which students in the early stage shared their research ideas and plans.

**ROZEE BENAVIDES**

Major: Anthropology & Spanish  
Research Interests: Evolutionary Anthropology, Human Rights  
Mentors: Dr. Jocelyn DeHaas & Dr. Catherine Rhodes

**ORAL PRESENTATION: It’s not a problem until it’s a problem: How studying social practice can shed light on health culture and type 2 diabetes in Isla Mujeres**

Diabetes is a serious public health problem in Mexico with a particular concern in Isla Mujeres. With its sparkling beaches, delicious ceviche, and dazzling sunsets, the Caribbean island of Isla Mujeres in Quintana Roo, Mexico, is paradise to all; nevertheless, an estimated 80% of the population has Type 2 diabetes. The focus of this ethnography study is to understand the cultural and societal domains of food as a social practice, nutrition, and education that have led to this food-related disease. In a primarily isleño (islander) population, I conducted a mixed method ethnographic study that integrated an anthropological lens with an applied research design. The rate of Type 2 diabetes within this population highlights the need to include in-depth, qualitative exploration of local context, social environment, and isleño culture when considering how to create change. Clinical data, formal and informal interviews, and surveys reveal the need to improve accessible patient education programs.

**HALLIE BROWN**

Major: Sociology & International Studies  
Research Interests: Human Rights, Cultural Adaptation, and Globalization  
Mentors: Sarita Cargas & Marygold Walsh-Dilley

**ORAL PRESENTATION: The Iliterate “Other”: Christianity, Coloniality, and Knowledge Production**

Education and educational materials are not free from power structures nor are they apolitical. The organization Literacy and Evangelism International creates literacy primers that are intended to be used throughout the world and in developing context to teach literacy through a bible content method. Because the literacy primers are created in the west, but intended for use outside of a western context, the power dynamics between the educator and learner are dictated through this dichotomy. Through examining the content of the literacy primers, this project looks at how knowledge is produced through the primers and how this is a form of coloniality. This project aims at understanding the larger implications of colonized knowledge production and examines the consequences of positioning literacy learners as the “other.”
ORAL PRESENTATION: *Emerson’s Physic*

"Emerson’s Physic" reads Emerson’s philosophy through the metaphors of nineteenth-century medical intervention and against a culture in need of palliation. Emancipated Americans in the nineteenth century were confronted with the unresolved problems of revolutionary "freedom," the tautological problem of American identity and the anguished uncertainty of Westward expansion. The somatic suffering of Americans was palliated through broadly "normative" and "heteronormative" medical intervention: By the rough hand of heroic medicine on the one hand and by means of alternative medical interventions that developed largely in reaction to the failure of this heroic medicine on the other, interventions that I have grouped together for thematic reasons as "homeopathy." Emerson’s psychic intervention as a lyceum lecturer is read as a "physic" with both heroic and homeopathic comportments. His heroic mode is barbed, tart and intended to force the question of life as one of will. His homeopathic mode is the more familiar mode and it mimics the diluted intervention of historical homeopathy proper, while sharing features with Thomsonianism, mesmerism and, hydropathy. Emerson’s physic fits on either side of the ledger, but in the last analysis demonstrates that the interventions of homeopathy and heroic medicine meet at their edges.

ORAL PRESENTATION: *Limitations of Safety on Campus: A Queer Critique*

Safety of citizens has long been a promise of the United States, yet the state fails to provide for the vulnerable, undocumented, and non-normative citizens. This has been an increasing issue, particularly police violence, ICE, health care, and the President. The university also promises safety for students and the community, including safety from the issues listed. Safe spaces have been created and debated on university campuses in recent years. Besides being topical in the public, queer and feminist theory has been in discussion about safe spaces for even longer. My paper critiques safe spaces, looking through gay and feminist histories, suggesting an alternative for typical notions of safety.
THOMAS “TRE” GRAVES
Major: Political Science & Environmental Science
Research Interests: Political Ecology, Green Political Theory
Mentor: Jami Nelson-Núñez

TALKING CIRCLE: Green Energy Policy in the United States

Government policy solutions to climate change and overall environmental degradation have become increasingly partisan. This stark divide between the two major parties is evident in the voting patterns of legislatures from the two parties. Presumably, the Republican Party is heavily resistant to a transition to renewable energy, while the Democratic Party tepidly advances green energy solutions, alongside a push for cleaner-burning fossil fuels, such as natural gas. As carbon-dioxide levels continue to rise above the 400 part per million (ppm) mark, the approaches taken by state legislatures towards energy policy will continue to be of extreme importance. A good measure of the action being taken to combat climate change is analyzing the number of bills introduced in state legislatures that deal with the issue of sustainable energy. Including a comparison to the overall number of bills introduced, will give inquirers the information needed to see what, if anything, state legislatures are doing to prevent an unprecedented rise in greenhouse gas emissions. Comparing the percentage of renewable energy bills introduced in the various state legislatures, to the percentage of fossil fuel bills introduced, can be used to demonstrate differences among the states when it comes to energy policy. Lastly, showing which bills are positive versus negative, along party lines, will establish voting tendencies between the two parties. A positive bill for both renewable and unrenewable energy sources would be one that attempts to increase its production, while a negative bill would be one that decreases its production.

HOTVLKUCE HARJO
Major: Women’s Studies & Arts Studio
Research Interests: Indigeneity, Queer Theory, Disability
Mentor: Amy Brandzel

TALKING CIRCLE: Indigeneity and Disability

My research is guided by the parameters of Indigeneity and Disability. This is in part because within both of these fields, as well as other intersectional spaces, Indigeneity and Disability are pushed to the peripheries. My project will focus on curating a theoretical space that is informed by both Indigeneity and Disability. Due to the lack of classes around Disability Studies, my research thus far has been to teach myself what I can about Disability Studies while also understanding how I may later articulate this information through the lens of Indigeneity. From this research, I am beginning to find my place within these various spaces and how, when, and if I may move through them. This space or field of study would impact Humanities because the concerns and experience of those within the Disabled and Indigenous communities would be validated thus producing agency of one’s own narrative.
TIMOTEO “TJ” L’ESPERANCE
Major: Political Science
Research Interests: Border Politics
Mentor: Michael Rocca

TALKING CIRCLE: The harmful effects of President Trump’s immigration policies on people in the United States

Safety of citizens has long been a promise of the United States, yet the state fails to provide for the vulnerable, undocumented, and non-normative citizens. This has been an increasing issue, particularly police violence, ICE, health care, and the President. The university also promises safety for students and the community, including safety from the issues listed. Safe spaces have been created and debated on university campuses in recent years. Besides being topical in the public, queer and feminist theory has been in discussion about safe spaces for even longer. My paper critiques safe spaces, looking through gay and feminist histories, suggesting an alternative for typical notions of safety.

SHELBY ZUBIA
Major: Linguistics & Psychology
Research Interests: Language Preservation
Mentor: Dawn Nordquist

TALKING CIRCLE: Ethics in Language Revitalization and Language Documentation in Native American Communities

My research focuses on the ethical stipulations and the evolution of how the “outside linguist”, a researcher not belonging to the linguistic community, partakes in Native American language revitalization and documentation. With the world having a language death rate of 34 languages a year (Furbee, 2010), the field of language revitalization and documentation has become increasingly popular and vital, specifically with Native American linguistic communities. In the past, the involvement of an outside linguist was considered negative, with their research having no real benefit to the community itself. This relationship has evolved to something more optimistic and humanitarian-like, with the linguistic community’s interests at the forefront of the research. I will examine the present relationship between linguists and the linguistic communities they are studying, as well as the evolution of language documentation deriving from language preservation.
The UNM Honors College welcomed new Dean Greg Lanier this past August. Greg was installed as the new MMUF Coordinator in October and looks forward to working with the entire UNM community.

With Greg coming onboard the MMUF Program honored outgoing MMUF Coordinator and UNM University College Dean Kate Krause at the recent MMUF 2017 WRC. Kate dedication and service over the years will be missed.

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