

La Compañera



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Building Dignity: Land invasion in Lima, Peru

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Building Dignity

Community Planning in Peru's Marginalized Neighborhoods



Paul Dosh '96 returned to campus on October 8th to a resounding welcome from professors and students alike. As a tenured political science professor at Macalester College, Dosh has remained near to Carleton but has expanded the reach of his community engagement thousands of miles south.

In his talk entitled "Demanding the Land: Urban Movements and Building Dignity in Peru's Marginalized Neighborhoods," Dosh emphasized the interplay between research and community engagement. In his work, he studies the dynamics of land invasions in small communities in Peru. During a land invasion, hundreds or thousands of low-income residents of a city gather in an attempt to improve their housing situations. They organize to invade a plot of land in the middle of the night and ensure that the police are kept busy. With building materials already in hand, they build a neighborhood overnight.

The principal problem that Dosh addressed was that of community planning—there is organization when the neighborhood is first built, but as it matures and begins to succeed, participation in organizations such as community planning committees drops off. Due to a lack of community participation, the neighborhood declines and begins to fail.

Dosh began his research by trying to understand why neighborhood participation would decline as soon as a community found success. To this end, he immersed himself in some of these neighborhoods in Peru, working at once to understand the problems at hand and trying to resolve them.

What he found was a lack of support. Neighborhood leaders were innovative, but found themselves with a thankless job and quit soon after assuming the leadership role. They also lacked a central gathering place in the city and resources to work with. As a response, Dosh founded an organization called Building Dignity, which has a 2-story public community center in Lomo de Corvina (in Lima, Peru). A family lives in the top story of the building to ensure upkeep of the facility, and the bottom floor is open for community gatherings, leadership seminars, tutoring, and much more.

Dosh took an interdisciplinary approach to his talk, presenting a slideshow of photographs of the neighborhoods where he has worked in Peru, as well as a spoken word poem performed from the perspective of a local community leader. Dosh emphasizes a multimedia and interdisciplinary focus in his work in Peru as well, providing leadership classes to adults that are co-taught by community members and leaders with pedagogical skills.

At the end of his presentation, Dosh discussed volunteer opportunities that are available with Building Dignity. Because of the intensive training required, volunteers must commit to a minimum of 3-4 months and must have advanced Spanish skills. For a smaller commitment, there are other opportunities to work with Building Dignity from the Twin Cities or remotely.

For more information about Building Dignity, please visit buildingdignity.org.



Lyndon DeSalvo '10

Alumnus interview



"From my LTAM travels. Taken on the Carretera Austral in Chilean Patagonia, where I spent a couple of weeks camping."

What inspired you to declare LTAM Studies?

I had actually declared Spanish as a sophomore, but opted to switch to Latin American Studies. I realized that the Spanish classes I had taken as an underclassman, primarily with Jose and Becky, were all focused on Latin America and that my true interest lay in the region rather than the language. The LTAM Studies major was a great choice for me as the regional focus in a way melded the various courses in History, Political Science, and Spanish.

What was your most memorable academic moment, course, or study abroad experience in

LTAM Studies?

Eight years later, I would still have to say that my most memorable moment was the Guatemala trip with Jay Levi. I specifically enjoyed the rural home stay outside of Xela, which I spent researching the importance of volcanoes in Mayan mythology. While the project itself didn't necessarily turn out exactly as I'd hoped, the situations it led me to were unforgettable and have undoubtedly impacted my track since then. Latin American Politics with Al Montero is also a definite must for a LTAM major/concentrator.

Where have you gone professionally since Carleton and where do you hope to go?

I have gone many places since graduating Carleton, both in terms of employment and physical location. Most notably, I spent 9 months backpacking throughout Latin America with fellow '10 alum Brett Adelman in 2012. We started in Guatemala and worked our way down Central America and the spine of the Andes before spending two months in Brazil, all without getting on an airplane. In all, we calculated over 3 weeks were spent on buses, but what better way to see the landscape! Currently, I am working in Vermont as a Field Assistant for the Nature Conservancy. Much of my independent research at Carleton tended towards environmental issues in Latin America, which demonstrates the versatility and self-direction of the major.

What skills did you acquire through the LTAM Studies Program and how were they relevant for your life after Carleton?

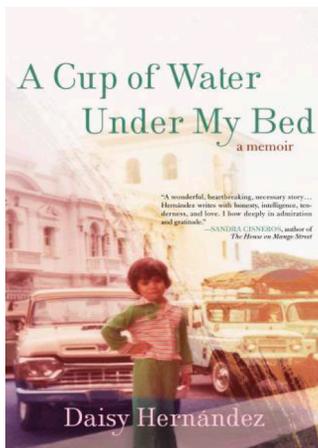
I would say that the LTAM track ensured that I examine things from multiple lenses, whether cultural, political, historical, etc., which ensured that I had a well-rounded understanding of a topic. It's almost as though the LTAM course of study encompasses a miniature Liberal Arts curriculum, as it requires a cross-discipline approach. Of course, some of the takeaways, such as the language component, are more tangible and extremely relevant even for those that work domestically. I've used my Spanish language skills not only in travel, but also in various positions including translating web content for a non-profit working in Central America. Since graduation, I have been learning Portuguese and also served as a Contributing Editor for a Latin American risk analysis firm, which required me to provide compact news updates on Brazil for our clientele. Finally, I would say the LTAM major and Comps requires students to be more independent than some other majors since you are not under the wing of one department. Although this can be challenging at times, it definitely made me a stronger student and more confident in my own research capacities.

Any advice or anything else you want to share?

Although it's still unclear to me whether or not my ultimate career will directly relate to my LTAM degree, I wouldn't change my course of study in hindsight. I was also a Studio Art major and, between the two

Daisy Hernández

The intersection of feminism and LTAM studies



Author Daisy Hernández, a New Jersey native of Colombian and Cuban heritage, gave the Latino Heritage Convocation speech on Friday, October 3rd. Her talk, entitled "Feminism, Sofia Vergara, and Writing about Familia: A Talk on Media Representation" addressed how we can talk productively about feminism and integrate discussions of feminism with race.

Hernández said that she first became interested in feminism as a 10-year-old. Her teacher had asked for a simple writing assignment: convince the class that aliens might exist on other planets. She took it as a challenge; her uncle was listed officially as a 'resident alien,' so if aliens exist on this planet, why couldn't they exist elsewhere? She completed the assignment with a new wave of confidence and inspiration for the future. If it was that easy to change what people thought about other groups, what could she accomplish in the real world? To this day, she retains the mission of moving towards gender and racial equality through writing, speaking, and teaching.

Hernández also discussed the current state of media representations of women, especially Latinas. She cited various television shows that are broadcast in Spanish in the United States, such as *Sábado Gigante* and *El Gordo y la Flaca*—both of which are guilty of objectifying and over sexualizing Latina women. In the latter show, the host appears fully dressed in a suit while surrounded by women in short dresses or bikinis. Hernández uses this program to call for a change, a focus on the whole woman. In the case of Sofia Vergara, for example, she advocates for appreciation of not only her beauty, but also her incredible talent and business savvy.

Hernández has years of experience talking and writing about issues of feminism in race through her work for *Colorlines* and *The New York Times*, and as a columnist for *Ms. Magazine*. From this background, she offers us three pieces of very accessible advice for how we as students can lead the movement toward equality.

First, she suggests, we must start associating positive words with feminism. Feminism has long been associated with words like "man-hating," "unhygienic," and "lesbian." Words like this hinder the movement, discouraging potential activists from labeling themselves as feminists. Hernández wants words like "civil rights" and "equality" to take over the movement, so there is no shame in becoming involved.

Next, we must call out the "race codes"—disparaging comments that lead to thinking of some groups as superior or inferior to others. By generating an awareness of what comments may unintentionally be hurtful to others, we can begin to consciously avoid hateful speech and hateful racial representations in the media. Although Hernández uses the phrase "race code," the term reaches far wider than race. She refers to any negative comments that stem from the relative inequality of groups, such as prejudice on the basis of race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Finally, Hernández calls on us to create new stories. She reminds us that personal stories are what inspire change, and that there are never enough memoirs. This is what inspired her to tell her own story, published as a memoir called *A Cup of Water Under my Bed*. In it, she discusses the lessons she learned growing up in a family of immigrant women, and how her views of gender and race were profoundly shaped by her upbringing. Hernández also edited a compilation of the stories of many other women of color, entitled *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*. Although young people rarely tell their own stories, these stories may be the most influential.

This convocation speech, sponsored by the Office of International and Intercultural Life (OIIL), drew students from a wide variety of majors. Leah Cole '15, a computer science major, said after the talk that "it made me more comfortable with my feelings as a feminist. Feminism is hard to talk about, but I realize now that what I feel doesn't have to be monumental in order to be a step in the right direction."

Course Offerings

Winter 2015

ENGL 119: Introduction to U.S. Latino/a Literature

Adriana Estill; T, Th 10:10-11:55

We will begin by examining the forefathers and mothers of Latino/a literature: the nineteenth century texts of exile, struggles for Latin American independence, and southwestern resistance and accommodation. The early twentieth century offers new genres: immigrant novels and popular poetry that reveal the nascent Latino identities rooted in (or formed in opposition to) U.S. ethics and ideals. Finally we will read a sampling of the many excellent contemporary authors who are transforming the face of American literature.

POSC 221: Latin American Politics

Alfred Montero; M, W 11:10-12:20, F 12:00-1:00

Comparative study of political institutions and conflicts in selected Latin American countries. Attention is focused on general problems and patterns of development, with some emphasis on U.S.-Latin American relations.

SOAN 323: Mother Earth: Women, Development and the Environment

Constanza Ocampo-Raeder; T, Th 1:15-3:00

Why are so many sustainable development projects anchored around women's cooperatives? Why is poverty depicted as having a woman's face? Is the solution to the environmental crisis in the hands of women the nurturers? From overly romantic notions of stewardship to the feminization of poverty, this course aims to evaluate women's relationships with local environments and development initiatives. The course uses anthropological frameworks to evaluate case studies from around the world. *Prerequisite: The department strongly recommends that 110 or 11 be taken prior to enrolling in courses numbered 200 or above.*

SPAN 242: Introduction to Latin American Literature

Silvia Lopez; M, W 1:50-3:00, F 2:20-3:20

An introductory course to reading major texts in Spanish provides an historical survey of the literary movements with Latin American literature from the pre-Hispanic to the contemporary period. Recommended as a foundation course for further study. Not open to seniors. *Prerequisite: Spanish 204 or proficiency.*

SPAN 262: Myth and History in Central American Literature

Yansi Perez; M, W 12:30-1:40, F 1:10-2:20

In this course we study the relationship between myth and history in Central America since its origins in the Popol Vuh, the sacred texts of the Mayans until the period of the post-civil wars era. The course is organized in the chronological manner. We will study, in addition to the Popol Vuh, the chronicles of Alvarado, some poems by Rubén Darío and Francisco Gavidia, some of the writings of Miguel Ángel Asturias and Salarrué. The course will end with study of critical visions of the mythical presented by more contemporary authors such as Roque Dalton and Luis de León.

SPAN 344: Women Writers in Latin America: Body and Text

Becky Boling; M, W 9:50-11:00, F 9:40-10:40

This course examines texts by women authors who write from a critical and gendered perspective about women, desire, and identity. Through the metaphor of the body, the narratives disclose both the limits and the implicit/explicit resistance the protagonists embody. Emphasis is on texts from the twentieth century to the present. Among the authors include: Bombal, Castellanos, Valenzuela, Peri Rossi, Poniatowska, Buitrago, Serrano, Luiselli. *Prerequisite: Spanish 205 or similar*

SPAN 358: The Spanish Civil War

Jorge Brioso; T, Th 3:10-4:55

Considered by many historians the beginning of the II World War, the Spanish Civil war served as the arena where the main ideologies of the twentieth century—Capitalism, Fascism, and Communism—first clashed. The result was not only one of the bloodiest wars in history, but also was of the most idealistic, with 40,000 volunteers from all over the world willing to die in defense of a country they did not even know. This course will explore the meaning of the war through a variety of mediums and disciplines, including literature, history, graphic arts, and films. *Prerequisite: Spanish 205 or above.*