



FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

Dear Alumni and Friends,

The [Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature](#) hopes this message finds you well and enjoying the beauty of the season as we celebrate this academic year together.

This past May, we celebrated another joyful and inspiring commencement ceremony. As we do every year, we felt immense pride in our students' growth—not only as scholars and professionals, but as individuals, university citizens, lifelong friends and new members of our alumni community. Their, and your, achievements continue to enrich our Department, our university community and state.

This past spring also marked an exciting period of collaboration and outreach. We strengthened ties with other departments and hosted a series of events that placed Hispanic Languages and Literature at the heart of humanities scholarship and practice at Stony Brook. At a time when the importance of a well-rounded university education has never been clearer, we take pride in our innovative and meaningful collaborations across diverse academic fields. These contributions are helping to reshape the humanities and enrich the broader landscape of both undergraduate and graduate education.

Wishing you all a season of growth, gratitude, and continued success.

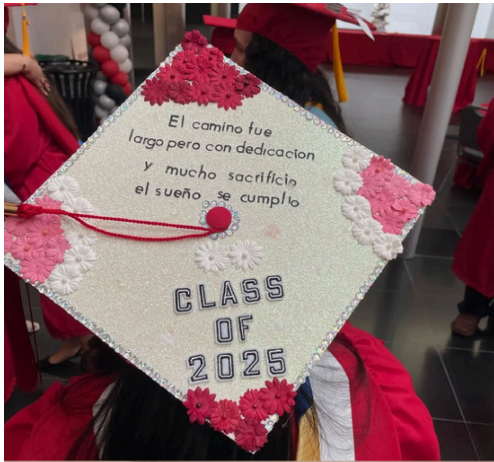
With best wishes,
Paul Firbas
Associate Professor and Chair



Testing hydrophones for underwater stories. Students and professors in HLL and Art during one of the AWA (Actions of Water Awareness) events, May 2025.

Convocation Ceremony 2025

This past May, we had the honor and joy of celebrating our graduating students from the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature! The HLL convocation was a wonderful opportunity for our department to come together, recognize our students' hard work, and celebrate their achievements as they move forward to new adventures.



Undergraduate Student Spotlight: Helen Bercian

Following the recommendation of our faculty in advanced courses (SPN 300 and 400), we are delighted to spotlight **Helen Bercian**, who is currently enrolled in our 5-year combined undergraduate and graduate program: BA/MAT in Spanish Language and Literature with [Secondary Teaching Preparation](#).

We asked Helen about her experience as a student in our classes, her recommendations to other students and her plans after completing her degrees with us.

[Click here to read more](#)



Undergraduate News

Tertulia Literaria

Every Spring, the Department hosts the annual Literary Gathering, or "Tertulia Literaria," organized by Professor Lilia Ruiz-Debbe, director of the Spanish Language Program. This tertulia is a grand mosaic of poems produced in HLL's Spanish language undergraduate classrooms. Students are selected by their instructors to present their original poems, in Spanish, in front of a large audience. After the event, students are treated to lunch and gather to discuss their poetic presentations.



Portuguese Language Club Hosts “Fest Junina”

This past May, the Portuguese Language Club organized a celebration of Festa Junina, a traditional Brazilian festivity typically held in June throughout the country. The event presented customs from the rural regions of Brazil.

During the celebration, students participated in traditional games, learned to dance the famous “quadrilha,” a folkloric square dance, and enjoyed typical Brazilian sweets.



Spanish Tutorial and Writing Center Presents: Talleres en Español

Located in the Humanities Building Room 1082, the Department has a writing center dedicated to helping students perfect their Spanish writing skills. The Spanish Writing Center hosted a series of interactive workshops for students focusing on specific skills and activities like writing a narration, learning about verb tenses or accent placement. Instructors are present to meet with students throughout the semester offering personalized support and guidance.



Graduate News: Welcome New Doctoral Students



Adrian Garcia-Amado comes to Stony Brook from Spain, with an MA in Teaching Secondary Education from the University of A Coruña, Spain.

Braulio Paz joins us from Peru, with an MA in Spanish and Hispanic Literature, Theory and Comparative Literature, from the University de Salamanca, Spain.

Welcome to our community!

Click [here](#) to read their full profiles.

Photo credit: Catalina Joseph

The Difference You Make 2025 Awards and Recognition Ceremony



This annual College of Arts and Sciences event celebrates excellence in the CAS community. We were honored to have recipients from the Department represented at this year's event.

IDEA Grads **Jesús Jiménez Valdés** and **María Medín-Doce** were recognized, as well as Guiliano Global Fellows **Catalina Joseph**, **María Paula Lizarazo** and **Milena Acosta**. In addition, our HLL faculty member, Professor **Kathleen Vernon**, was recognized for her recent retirement.

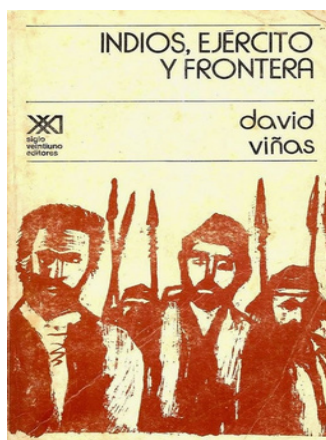
PhD Candidate Catalina Joseph, Recipient of The Edward Guiliano PhD '78 Global Fellowship Program

PhD candidate **Catalina Joseph** was named an Edward Guiliano, PhD '78, Global Fellow for her project titled, "Transnational Connections in Horror Comics from the Metropolitan Cities of São Paulo and Buenos Aires" in São Paulo, Brazil.

Full-time doctoral students in the College of Arts and Sciences may utilize this award for research toward a journal article, dissertation, or related work of artistic expression, as well as for outside-of-the-academy career development.



PhD Candidate Milena Acosta, Recipient of The Edward Guiliano PhD '78 Global Fellowship



PhD candidate **Milena Acosta** was granted an Edward Guiliano Fellowship, which offers students the opportunity to carry out self-directed research, creative expression and cultural activities for personal development through traveling outside of their comfort zone. Milena will be traveling to Berlin's *The Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut* (Ibero-American Institute (IAI) funded by the prestigious College of Arts and Sciences, Edward Guiliano '78), to conduct research about the making of the book, *Indios, Ejército y Frontera*, by the Argentinian literary scholar David Viñas.

PhD Candidate **María Paula Lizarazo**, Recipient of The Edward Guiliano PhD '78, Global Fellowship

Thanks to the Guiliano Global Fellowship, PhD candidate **María Paula Lizarazo** traveled to the Amazon rainforest to visit a mobile library initiative led by the Tukano (or Magüta) indigenous communities and the Omacha Foundation in Puerto Nariño and Tarapoto Lakes, at the frontier between Colombia and Peru. During the research, she also attended the course Amazon: conservation and storytelling for its future, taught by international documentalists, including the Oscar-winning Pippa Ehrlich.



Valentina Pucci, Edward Guiliano Global Fellowship Recipient, meets Blas Matamoro in Madrid



The Edward Guiliano Global Fellowship supported our doctoral candidate **Valentina Pucci's** archival research on Blas Matamoro, an exiled Argentine writer and co-founder of one of Latin America's first LGBTQ+ rights organizations.

This research, conducted in Madrid in February 2025, was instrumental in developing the dissertation's theoretical framework on queer authorship and performative politics in Argentine literature. Thanks to this fellowship, Valentina was able to analyze Matamoro's personal archive and to interview him in person at the Café Comercial.

Sebastián López Vergara Hosts Visit with Michael Wilson and Jose Antonio Lucero



Last Spring, **Michael Wilson**, Tohono O'odham human and migrant rights activist, and **José Antonio Lucero**, professor of Latin American and Indigenous Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle, visited Stony Brook University to present their book, *What Side Are You On?* Wilson and Lucero also visited HUS150 (Latin American Indigenous Peoples), where they discussed the long-standing humanitarian crisis at the border and Mike Wilson's decades-long efforts to support migrants. The visit was organized by Sebastián López Vergara, with support from HLL, NAIS, and LACS.

PhD Student is awarded the Turner Summer Research Grant in 2025

Jeannette Rivera Negrón was awarded the Turner Summer Research Grant to advance her dissertation. The grant covered travel expenses to Puerto Rico, allowing Jeannette to delve into non-circulating early 20th-century resources at the University of Puerto Rico library for her dissertation on nation-building discourses and insular imaginaries.



Portuguese Language Book Club



During the spring semester, a new edition of the Portuguese Language Book Club took place. In collaboration with LACS, Monica Vicentini, our visiting faculty in Portuguese, led a discussion of the celebrated short story "Venha ver o pôr do sol," by renowned Brazilian author Lygia Fagundes. The event connected participants interested in Brazilian language and literature, making it an inspiring conversation.

HLL and LACS Series: Inclusion and Exclusion in Colonial Latin America: Languages, Embodiment and Sexuality



In April, HLL and LACS hosted two roundtables under the theme "Inclusion and Exclusion in Colonial Latin America: Languages, Embodiment, and Sexuality."

The sessions featured scholars and artists such as Antonio Feros, University of Pennsylvania, José del Valle (CUNY), Daniela Ortiz, alumnus Víctor Pueyo, Temple University, Zeb Tortorici, New York University, and María Emma Mannarelli, San Marcos University. Over 100 participants joined in person and online to discuss the intersections of colonialism, language, body, and sexuality. The events were supported by the LACS Series Grant awarded to Henry Ibáñez, Daniela Ruiz, and Quim Solias. More information [here](#).

Sant Jordi's HLL Celebration with the Institut Ramon Llull!

On April 24, 2025, HLL and the Institut Ramon Llull celebrated La Diada de Sant Jordi, Catalonia's Day of Books and Roses, with a lecture by Laia Miralles (Universitat de València / University of Chicago). Her talk, "Dying Like a King: Funerary Practices in the Early Modern Ages," explored the political propaganda surrounding the death of Louis XIII in 17th-century Catalan literature. The event was organized by our [THEM Lab](#), directed by Paul Firbas with the help of the Institut Ramon Llull and the collaboration of Quim Solias and Anita Rescia.



Anita Rescia Publishes Essay on Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio*



Congratulations to our doctoral student **Anita Rescia** for the publication of her article on Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio*! In March 2025, Anita published a transhistorical and transmedial analysis of Carlo Collodi's famous children's story, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*. The essay appears in the book, *Fantasía, aventura y sociedad: Perspectivas contemporáneas*, by Los Libros de la Catarata.

Early Modern Print Culture in Catalonia

On April 7, 2025, our [THEM Lab](#) hosted a hybrid lecture titled “Sources for the Study of Print and Press in the Early Modern Period in Catalanian Archives.” The talk was given by Professor Xevi Camprubí (University of Barcelona / Autonomous University of Barcelona) and explored the rich archival materials that illuminate the history of printing, journalism, and literature in the Spanish Golden Age. The event was organized by the THEM Lab with the support of Paul Firbas and Quim Solias. See a [video here](#).

Monica Vicentini



Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LACS) Graduate Student Research Summer Fellowship (GSRF) awarded to HLL PhD candidate, Milena Acosta

PhD candidate **Milena Acosta** received the Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LACS) Graduate Student Research Summer Fellowship (GSRF), which is given to graduate students across SBU whose research topics relate to Latin America and the Caribbean. Milena's research is about the South frontier between the Argentine nation-state and the indigenous peoples in the second half of the 19th Century.



Quim Solias Awarded Custard Institute Meadows Museum Travel Fellowship



Graduate student **Quim Solias** received a Custard Institute (Meadows Museum in Dallas) Travel Fellowship to conduct research on Rafaela Puig, a pioneering 17th-century woman cartographer from Barcelona.

His project involved archival work in Madrid and Barcelona, and was hosted by the Department of Early Modern History at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid under the supervision of Professor Antonio Álvarez Ossorio.

HLL PhD Students Present at LAILAC Conference in NYC

PhD students **Quim Solias**, **Daniela Ruiz**, **Maria Paula Lizarazo**, and **Henry Ibañez** presented a panel about Amazonian narratives and extractivism at the CUNY's Graduate Center - LAILAC Conference. The seminar on the Amazon taught by our HLL Professor Javier Uriarte, was stimulating and helped shape the papers presented by students.



PhD Candidate Catalina Joseph Explores Brazilian Comics



Narrativas desmarcadas: un desvío en las historias em quadrinhos

CATALINA JOSEPH

Mi primera interacción con las historietas fue en Brasil. Habíamos llegado desde Chile unos años antes y, apenas aprendí a leer, me regalaron mis primeros ejemplares de *Tema da Mônica*, una revista popular dirigida al público infantil y que se difundió hasta hoy de manera periódica. Con el tiempo crecí y, una vez por mes, empecé a pedirle a mi

que el término, otorgado del portugués de Brasil y no del de Portugal –donde se le conoce como *banda desenhada*–, no destaque el cuadro por sí solo, sino que haga referencia al conjunto de esos cuadros, concepción que parece establecer tanto una relación inherente entre ellos como una enmarcación geométrica que delimita esos espacios. Gifé es otro nombre con el que se conoce a la narrativa gráfica en Brasil. Con un tono más informal, su uso tiene un origen metonímico vinculado a una revista publicada a mediados del siglo XX, que incluyó ilustraciones individualmente racistas. Sin embargo, esto no impidió que sus recopilaciones conmemorativas posteriores continuaran difundiendo ese tipo de representaciones peyorativas. El término

The dossier "Enmarcar, encuadrar y contener: reflexiones desde la literatura, las artes y los oficios" was an invitation to reflect on the ideas that emerge from reading *La transparencia de las ventanas* (2023) by Macarena García Moggia. Catalina Joseph (Cata) explores Brazilian comics through formats that challenge the frame that traditionally encloses the panel, seeking to reveal the fiction that persists within and beyond that structure, and the ways Brazilian authors have broken away from it since the very beginning.

Stony Brook's Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature at Rutgers!

Congratulations to our doctoral students **Maria Paula Lizarazo** and **Samuel Espíndola**, and Professor **Javier Uriarte**, for their papers presented at the first Andean Amazonian Symposium 2025, held at Rutgers University this past April.



HLL at the Graduate Student Conference in UC Berkeley



In April 2025, **Paulette Rosales** and **Anita Rescia** had the opportunity to travel to UC Berkeley to participate in the graduate student conference titled "Variar, Desviar, Quebrar." They presented the papers "El espectáculo del simulacro. Corporalidades desgarradas, corporalidades fisuradas" and "El sueño del hijo perfecto en La tía Tula (1964) y Mi hija Hildegart (1977)", respectively.

HLL 2025 Graduate Conference: *Territorios en crisis, Challenges to the Humanities*

In March, the Department hosted an all day Graduate Conference focused on challenges to the humanities. Mary Louise Pratt, professor emerita, New York University, was the keynote speaker and presented her lecture "Earth, Air, Fire, Water" followed by a reception where guests, speakers and attendees mingled.



Dissertations Recently Defended:

Alejandro Chacon:

From the Impossible to the Imaginary State

Advisor: Javier Uriarte

Committee:

Lena Burgos-Lafuente, Paul Firbas and Catalina Arango, Princeton University



Carlos Vicéns:

Sed de historia: Una cartografía espectropolítica de la poesía puertorriqueña (1930 - presente)

Advisor: Lena Burgos-LaFuente

Committee:

Paul Firbas, Aurelie VIALETTE, Yale University and Noel Luna, University of Puerto Rico



Evelyn Cruise:

Precarious Pulses: Crisis, Affect, and Globalization in Spanish and Transnational Cinema

Advisor: Kathleen Vernon

Committee:

Daniela Flesler, Aurelie VIALETTE, Yale University, and Eva Woods Peiró, Vassar College



Maria Medin Doce:

Ficciones del hogar: voces femeninas del desplazamiento en la literatura española del siglo XX

Advisors:

Kathleen Vernon and Lena Burgos-LaFuente

Committee:

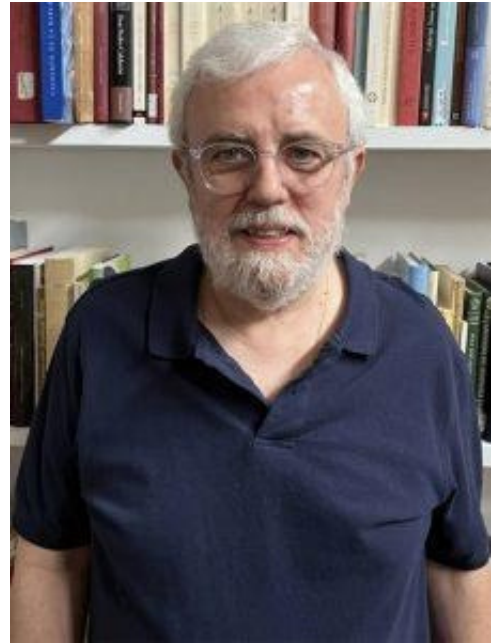
Javier Uriarte and Lou Charnon-Deutsch



Victor Roncero López Appointed as Distinguished Professor

The Distinguished Faculty Rank (DFR) programs recognize and reward SUNY's finest and most accomplished faculty, and constitute the highest system tribute conferred upon SUNY faculty. HLL's very own **Victor Roncero-López** has been appointed to the Distinguished Faculty Rank, which encourages his ongoing commitment to excellence, kindles intellectual vibrancy, elevates the standards of instruction and enriches contributions to public service. He demonstrates the State University's pride and gratitude for consummate professionalism, groundbreaking scholarship, exceptional instruction and breadth and significance of service contributions.

Click [here](#) to read more



Katy Vernon Named Toll Professor



Kathleen (Katy) Vernon, a longtime highly respected member of the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature, retired this past summer after a distinguished academic career devoted to the study of contemporary Spanish and Latin American cinema, literature, and popular culture. In recognition of her scholarly contributions, leadership, and deep commitment to teaching and mentorship, Katy was awarded the title of Toll Professor, which allows professors to hold a special post retirement assignment. Katy's work has enriched our understanding of visual and literary cultures across the Spanish-speaking world, and her courses inspired generations of students to engage critically and passionately with the vibrant cultural productions of Spain and Latin America. Her influence continues to shape the department and the broader field.

Welcome Valeria Meiller as HLL's New Assistant Professor

HLL welcomes **Valeria Meiller**, an assistant professor and a core faculty member of the Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) Initiative. Her research lies at the intersection of Indigenous studies and the environmental humanities with an emphasis in plurilingual poetry and the visual arts. Valeria is currently working on two book projects: *Necroterritories. Slaughterhouses and the Politics of Death* and *In Defense of the Land*, and *Biodiversity and Linguistic Diversity in 21st Century of Abiyala*.



[Click here to read more](#)

Welcome IDEA Post-Doc to Assistant Professor, Sebastián López Vergara

Sebastián López Vergara specializes in Latinx and Indigenous Diaspora Studies. His research focuses on Indigenous representations across media and their relationships to histories of dispossession in modern Latin America with a particular focus on Chile. He completed his PhD at University of Washington, Seattle, where he taught cultural studies, critical ethnic studies, and Latin American studies courses, as well as Spanish language and contemporary Latin American history with University Beyond Bars, an organization offering post-secondary education to the incarcerated in Washington State's prisons.

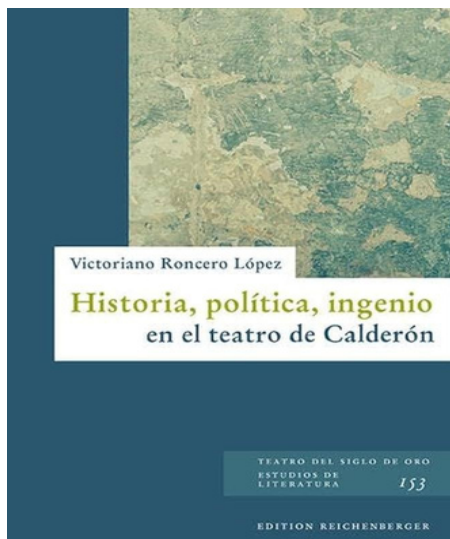


[Click here to read more](#)

Faculty Publications



Joseph Pierce's new book, *Speculative Relations, Indigenous Wording and Repair*, was published by Duke University Press.



Victoriano Roncero-Lopez's new book, *Historia, política, ingenio en el teatro de Calderón*, Kassel, Reichenberger, Edition Reichenberger.

Accelerated College Education (ACE) in Spanish Hosts its 9th Annual Professional Development Workshop

The ACE (Accelerated College Education) in Spanish and the Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature hosted the **9th Annual Professional Development Workshop**, focusing on assessment challenge and achievements in the classroom. This event was as part of a partnership with several high schools in Suffolk and Nassau County. Peter Diplock, vice provost for Continuing, Professional, and Executive Education, gave the welcome remarks to the conference attendees. The conference was organized by Aura Colon and Lilia Ruiz- Debbe.



Zaida Corniel Attends the International Symposium of the Tomitana Academy in Romania

Last August, **Zaida Corniel** presented her short story collection *Para adolescentes, premenopáusicas y especialistas de la salud* and her play *Ay Fefa, ¿Where is the Wind?* at the International Symposium of the Tomitana Academy in Constanta, Romania. In that context, she also gave a talk about Latinos in the United States.

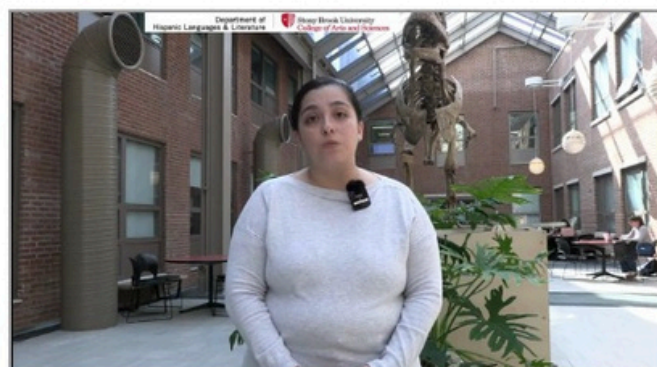


Explore our MA Programs and Join our Community!

Students enrolled in our MA programs (MA in Hispanic Languages and Literatures and MA in Teaching) have the option of taking online summer and winter courses to speed up their graduation time. Check our website for more information on our MA programs, courses and events.

[Click here to read more](#)

Voices from Our Students:



Thank You for Your Support!

Resources for faculty and students support and strengthen the educational experience. The [Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature](#) depends on our alumni and friends to expand field opportunities for our students and provide seed money for senior honors theses and summer research experiences.

Please consider investing in our students by [making a gift](#) today or speaking with [Julianna Ashton](#), Director of Development, at (631) 632-1455.

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