AFRO-LATIN AMERICAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT THE HUTCHINS CENTER HARVARD UNIVERSITY
Building the New Field of Afro-Latin American Studies
Housed at the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University, the Afro-Latin American Research Institute is the first research institution in the United States devoted to the history and culture of peoples of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Over 95 percent of the Africans forcibly imported into the Americas went to Latin America and the Caribbean, almost two-thirds of them to the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. Many Hispanics in the United States are also of African descent. Cultural forms and community practices associated with Africa are conspicuous across the region - indeed, the very existence of Latin America would be unthinkable without them. During the last few decades, Afro-Latin Americans have created numerous civic, cultural, and community organizations to demand recognition, equality and resources, prompting legislative action and the implementation of compensatory policies. The Afro-Latin American Research Institute stimulates and sponsors scholarship on the Afro-Latin American experience and provides a forum where scholars, intellectuals, activists and policy makers engage in exchanges and debates.
The Afro-Latin American Research Institute (ALARI) at Harvard University stimulates and sponsors scholarship on the Afro-Latin American experience and provides a forum where scholars, intellectuals, activists and policy makers engage in exchanges and debates. Our main mission is to build the new field of Afro-Latin American Studies in dialogue with the variety of actors involved in the design and implementation of race justice initiatives in the region and in the production of knowledge about Afrodescendants.
ALARI sponsors a variety of research and teaching activities to promote the field of Afro-Latin American Studies in cooperation with scholars from around the world.

ALARI has signed a collaborative agreement with the OAS to implement the goals of the UN’s Decade for People of African Descent in Latin America.

Activists are knowledge producers. Their initiatives, strategies and demands shape the research and teaching agendas of the field. We work with many organizations in Latin America and United States and welcome new ideas for collaboration.

We work with educational and cultural authorities to include the history and culture of Afrodescendants in the curriculum and to reach underserved populations.

Academia

Activism

International Organizations

Government Actors
Initiatives

2015 - 2024
INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Our initiatives and programs connect with the various constituencies involved in the development and consolidation of Afro-Latin American Studies.
In response to the United Nations Resolution that proclaims 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent (resolution 68/237) the ALARI has launched an ambitious program of consultations where activists from the Afrodescendant movement in Latin America, representatives of international agencies and foundations, government officials, and scholars come together to articulate concrete goals for the Decennial.

Highlights of this program include:

• The symposia “Afrodescendants: Fifteen Years after Santiago. Achievements and Challenges” (Harvard University, December 2015) and “After Santiago 2000: The Afrodescendant Movement and Afro-Latin American Studies” (Universidad de Cartagena, December 2016) with the participation of activists, scholars, agency representatives and policy makers from the whole region.
• The symposium “The Afro-Cuban Movement: Activism and Research. Accomplishments and Challenges” (Harvard, April 2017), with the participation of activists from the Afrodescendant movement in Cuba.

• OAS-Hutchins Center Agreement: The Afro-Latin American Research Institute and the Department of Social Inclusion at the Organization of American States are working together to implement the collaborative agreement that General Secretary Luis Almagro and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Director of the Hutchins Center, signed on April 4, 2017. The institutions are working together to realize the goals of the United Nation’s International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) in Latin America.
- A series of Lectures and Q&A Sessions on Race Justice in Latin America with policymakers and activists from the region.

- President Dilma Rousseff, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Alejandro de la Fuente, April 21, 2017. Photo by Anibal Martel (Left)

- Photo by Melissa Blackall (Bottom)
Building the New Field of Afro-Latin American Studies
A yearly event hosted by the ALARI, the Mark Claster Mamolen Dissertation Workshop selects the best doctoral dissertations on Afro-Latin American topics anywhere in the world and invites its authors for a two-day meeting at Harvard. The classes of 2016 (14) and 2017 (13) were selected from a pool of 96 applicants from universities and research institutions in Europe (Spain, France, Germany, United Kingdom), Canada, the United States, and Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Mexico). This program is supported by a bequest from Mark Claster Mamolen (1946-2013), the Weatherhead Center of International Affairs, the Ford Foundation, and the International Academic Program of the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (IAP UAM).
An initiative launched by the graduate students affiliated with the ALARI, this annual event invites graduate students doing research on Afro-Latin American topics to share their work. The first conference, convened in collaboration with the graduate students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, took place at Harvard on April 2017 with the participation of students from twenty five different institutions from nine different countries (Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, and the United States).
Working Group on Comparative Slavery

An international network of scholars interested in comparative and transnational questions concerning slavery, the Group organizes a yearly research conference to discuss new research on slavery in the Americas, Africa, and the Mediterranean world. ALARI Visiting Research Scholar Marial Iglesias Utset leads this initiative. Co-sponsored with the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University, the 2015-16 conference was titled “New Scholarship on the Slave Trade.” The 2016-17 conference was devoted to the theme “Slaves and the Law: Comparative Questions and Approaches.” The Group will sponsor conferences at Leeds University and at Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona) in 2017 and 2018.
Afro-Latin America Book Series

Cambridge University Press has launched a new and unprecedented book series, Afro-Latin America, edited by George Reid Andrews (University of Pittsburgh) and Alejandro de la Fuente (Harvard University). The series aims to showcase scholarship produced by different disciplines, including history, political science, sociology, ethnomusicology, anthropology, religious studies, art, law, and cultural studies. It covers the full temporal span of the African Diaspora in Latin America, from the early colonial period to the present.

Submissions should be sent to: George Reid Andrews (reid1@pitt.edu), Alejandro de la Fuente (delafuente@fas.harvard.edu), and Deborah Gershenowitz, senior editor for history at Cambridge University Press (dgershenowitz@cambridge.org).

Recently published:

Matthew Casey, Empire’s Guestworkers: Haitian Migrants in Cuba during the Age of US Occupation (2017)
Culture Together
ALARI Music
Leaders Education Students
Afro-Latin Studies
Mission People

Yosvany Terry, Bata Concert, April 15, 2017
Every year, the ALARI hosts two to three visiting fellows. Some of these fellows come with funding from their own institutions. Others apply to the Mark Claster Mamolen Research Fellowship at the W.E. B. Du Bois Institute’s Fellowship Program. Visiting scholars applying to the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies may also obtain an ALARI affiliation when appropriate.

Visiting Fellows

“My academic year at the Afro-Latin-American Research Institute was one of the best intellectual experiences I’ve had. This unique research institute centers on the study of racial issues in Latin America and will contribute to develop Afro-Latin American Studies in the USA and in Latin America as well. To be a Fellow at the Afro-Latin-American Research Institute was a possibility to build new networks in an interdisciplinary and highly qualified environment. The fellows colloquium was excellent and allowed me to learn about new approaches and perspectives. Also, the Institute has an excellent workspace and a very professional and kind staff.”

Márcia Lima, ALARI Visiting Fellow, Academic Year 2016-2017
Professor of Sociology at the University of São Paulo
“ALARI es el sitio donde confluyen al fin la diversidad afrodiáspórica en América Latina, en un ambiente de máximo respeto por la experiencia particular, excelentísimo nivel académico y vibrante multidisciplinaridad. Conjuntamente con la pluralidad de las comunidades afrodiáspóricas, ALARI fomenta el reconocimiento y celebración de la expresión africana, origen común, presente en cuanto hacemos generación tras generación en nuestras existencias americanas. Personalmente, mi vínculo con ALARI se traduce en la potenciación de la creatividad y la expansión del conocimiento, en el regocijo de vivir la afrodescendencia como un fenómeno global e íntimo a la vez. ALARI se ha convertido ya en una necesidad. Un espacio para dar y recibir, con entera confianza, en total libertad.”

Odette Casamayor Cisneros, ALARI Visiting Fellow
Associate Professor of Latin American and Caribbean Cultures at the University of Connecticut-Storrs
Afro-Latin America on STEAM (Science, Technology, Entrepreneurship, Art, Math) is an ALARI initiative to develop 21st century skills in Afrodescendant communities in Latin America, led by ALARI-affiliated faculty Doris Sommer. In February 2017, the project launched in collaboration with Colombia’s Ministry of Environment and the Secretary of Education in Quibdó (Chocó). It was to train 20 teachers at the Escuela Normal Superior of Quibdó in Pre-Texts with an emphasis on STEAM, thanks to support from NEACOL. Pre-Texts is a simple pedagogical protocol for dealing with difficult texts, by using them as raw material for making art in any genre participants choose. Since then, the new facilitators have been implementing Pre-Texts in their classrooms (approximately 424 students), and several have begun to replicate the methodology with other teachers.
People
Faculty Advisory Committee
Alejandro de la Fuente
Director, Afro-Latin American Research Institute, Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University
Robert Woods Bliss Professor of Latin American History and Economics
Professor of African and African American Studies and of History

George Reid Andrews
Distinguished Professor of History, University of Pittsburgh

Vincent Brown
Charles Warren Professor of History
Professor of African and African American Studies
David Carrasco

Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of the Study of Latin America, with a joint appointment with the Department of Anthropology in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Sidney Chalhoub

Professor of History and of African and African American Studies

Thomas B.F. Cummins

Dumbarton Oaks Professor of Pre-Columbian and Colonial Art
Gareth Doherty
Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Senior Research Associate, Harvard University Graduate School of Design

Lorgia García Peña
Assistant Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and of History and Literature

Tamar Herzog
Monroe Gutman Professor of Latin American Affairs - Radcliffe Alumnae Professor
Marial Iglesias Utset
Visiting Research Scholar at the Afro-Latin American Research Institute

Doris Sommer
Ira Jewell Williams Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures, Director of Graduate Studies in Spanish

Yosvany Terry
Visiting Senior Lecturer on Music / Director of Jazz Bands
Students

James Almeida
Ph.D. Candidate, History Department

His research examines the relationship between imperial powers in the first century of the Atlantic slave trade and the implications for international law. He is most interested in questions of how people created and navigated social order, focusing on the intersections between the law, social identification, and categories of difference (especially race and ethnicity).

Jonathon Booth
JD-Ph.D. Candidate, History Department and Law

His research focuses on criminal law and race in the post-emancipation Atlantic World, particularly the United States, Jamaica, and Cuba.
Her research focuses on questions of race, nationhood, citizenship and Afro-Colombian and indigenous mobilization in the 20th century. Examining cross-class and cross-ethnic spaces of mobilization such as labor unions, women groups, and political parties, her dissertation studies the possibilities and limits of Afro-Colombian and indigenous solidarity from the 1930s to the 1990s.

Laura Correa-Ochoa
Ph.D. Candidate, History Department

Her research focuses on the relationship between arts and politics in connection to nation making and racial formation processes in Cuba (1940s – 1960s), to better understand performative meanings and practices of identity and belonging.

Cary Aileen García Yero
Ph.D. Candidate, History Department

His research interests focus on the globalization of Afro-Cuban religions and the appropriation of African diaspora religions in the United States.

Russel Burk
Ph.D. Candidate, Religions of the Americas, Committee on the Study of Religion.
Marcella (Sally) Hayes
Ph.D. Candidate, History Department

Her proposed dissertation project centers on the legal, political, and social position of black slaves and free people of color in colonial Lima. Theoretically, two legal regimes, the república de indios and the república de españoles, governed colonial Latin America; her research explores how slaves and their descendants fit (or did not fit) into this system, both in theory and in practice.

Matthew Leslie Santana
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Music

He is broadly interested in race, sexuality, and performance in the Americas and his dissertation project focuses on drag performance and sexual revolution in Cuba.

Mary McNeil
Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies Program

Her research interests center around the representation of hemispheric Afro-Indigenous subjectivities in cultural, historical, and popular spheres of discourse, and the ways in which such representations impact the political struggles of Afro-Indigenous individuals and collectives. She also examines the ways in which black women’s gendered subjectivities are incorporated into larger circuits of diasporic political and social movement discourses.
Broadly, his research interests include theater and performance studies, 19th century American literature and culture, Afro-Latina/o literature and criticisms, critical race studies, aesthetics and critical theory, queer of color critique, and digital/public humanities. His dissertation is a critical study of Latino and Afro-Latino aesthetic and performance cultures in the long hemispheric 19th century.
Her research interests are in the area of nationalism, ethnicity, race, and gender in Latin America. She explores the role of people of African descent and indigenous peoples in the processes of constitutional change since the 1980s, focusing primarily on Ecuador and Bolivia.

**Carolina Silva Portero**  
*S.J.D. Candidate, Law School*

Her research interests include the politics and intersections of race, gender, beauty and hair as they affect and shape black women’s experiences throughout the diaspora, specifically in the Hispanic Caribbean.

**Miari Stephens**  
*Ph.D. Candidate, Department of African and African American Studies and Anthropology*
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