

UC Irvine - Chicano/Latino Studies

CAMINOS

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023

We bring you this first issue of Alumni Caminos, the UCI Chicano/Latino Studies Alumni Newsletter. The Caminos we take link our past and present to our future. In this very first issue, we will hear from our alumni on how their time at UCI helped shape their futures, from faculty and graduate students about their current work.

OUR FEATURED ALUMNI...



Joseph Macias
B.A. Chicano Latino Studies,
Political Science,
Class of 2006

Joseph Macias is originally from Porterville, CA, four hours away from UC Irvine. He first came to Irvine in the early 2000s as part of a program that allowed high school students to stay at UCI for an overnight campus visit. What led him to choose a major

in Chicano/ Latino Studies? "I think, for one, being part of that community on campus. It really helped me understand the different opportunities that there were for leadership and development and growth. It gave me a lot of exposure to opportunities to volunteer, for self-enrichment, for leadership." In Chicano/Latino Studies, Macias met social science scholars who were "very quantitatively focused on how to study populations in a quantifiable way. And I really appreciated that approach."

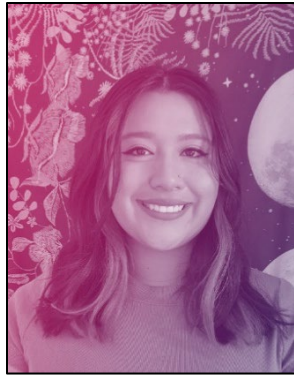
***Chicano/Latino Studies
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One of the professors with whom Macias formed a close bond was the political scientist Louis DeSipio, "He was just an excellent teacher," Macias said. "I understood concepts. I felt like we had such a great teacher-student connection, and he was just so great at explaining things." Macias wrote an honors thesis for the Chicano/ Latinos Studies Department, with Professor Louis DeSipio as his advisor. Macias also remembers the insights on

international policy and imperialism that he gained from the historian and political economist Gilbert Gonzalez. The professor's introductory Chicano/Latino Studies class "pulled me in and made it very fascinating for me." Macias said the quantitative research and analytical skills he learned as a Chicano/Latino Studies undergrad helped make for an "easy" transition when he enrolled in a graduate program at UCI, taking classes with Leo Chávez, among others.

After getting a Master's Degree in Demography, Macias went on to law school. Today he is a labor and employment attorney. "I've always found the Chicano/ Latino Studies department to be very welcoming. It's not just a department, but also kind of like a community, and that community has opened up a lot of doors for me."





Esmeralda Hic
Earth System Science B.S.,
Chicano/Latino Studies B.A.,
Class of 2020

Esmeralda Hic is originally from the Coachella Valley. She is a first-generation college student and also the first in her family to be a STEM major. Why did Hic choose UCI? “People were very welcoming,” she said. “And the school felt like the right size for me to be able to feel connected to people and be in community.” Hic and her family had also visited UCI before because they were a part of an Advancement Via Individual Determination program (AVID) at school.

Hic came to UCI as an Earth Systems major. In her first quarter at UCI, she took CHC/LAT 61 with Dr. Ana Elizabeth Rosas as an elective. “The way that Profesora Rosas connected to the class and helped create a sense of community was through instructing us to write three questions or concerns we had about starting the quarter. She created space for us to write anything we felt.”

“Department classes taught me essential research skills: How do you talk to people, how to get to root causes in your research.”

Dr. Rosas also encouraged Hic to apply to the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) and advised her on her research projects. After a couple of years of taking

classes in the department, Hic realized she was only three more classes away from the requirements for the major. Hic feels that Professor Rosas is “very instrumental to the department and helps guide students along with their learning.” Rosas hosted book exchanges and dinners during the holidays that helped create a sense of community among students.

Her experience in Chicano/Latino Studies helped her realize “that I care more about the people aspect of climate justice.” Department classes taught her essential research skills: “How do you talk to people? How to get to root causes in your research.” Today Hic lives in the Washington, DC, area where she works as a Collaborative Partnerships Coordinator at the People's Climate Innovation Center working at the intersection of climate change and racial justice.



Melissa Molina
B.A. in Education Sciences,
Political Science,
Chicano/Latino Studies, 2022

“I grew up in Fontana, a Black and brown working-class suburban area in the Inland Empire,” says recent UCI graduate Melissa Molina. “This upbringing empowered my framing of the need for abolitionist organizing towards the pursuit of liberation for marginalized people, like my peers and I and our loved ones.” At UCI, Molina was a Chicano/Latino Studies major, and also pre-law. She was introduced to Chicano/Latino Studies in 2018 with Professor Alana LeBrón, “where I

learned about young people who have organized alongside their communities for systemic change.”

Molina knew little about Orange County or “what it meant to be a college student” when she arrived at UCI. “I struggled deeply with feelings of inadequacy as I heard my political science peers discuss foreign affairs with a mature intellect that I felt incapable of producing.” But she found “comfort, community, and hope” talking with the Latinx campus workers in her dorm, dining hall, and across campus. “The love I had for these workers and the deep passion I had for justice ignited my organizing journey in the labor movement at UC,” she says.

“I learned about young people who have organized alongside their communities for systemic change.”

Molina conducted critical race studies research in Chc/Lat 101-102W, and was mentored by graduate students like Nalya Rodriguez, a Ph.D. student in the Sociology who often TAed for Chicano/ Latino Studies. Soon, Molina decided what her goal would be: to become a researcher. She was inspired by Diane Nevárez’s course on Multicultural K-12 Education, which “transformed what I thought was possible for education.”

She became dedicated to the idea of presenting “counterstories of students of color” and developed the idea into an independent research project and senior honors thesis for the Chicano/Latino Studies department under the supervision of Professor Ana Rosas. She also worked with Khamia Powell, a graduate student in Education, on Powell’s dissertation on the creation of culturally responsive professional development for teachers in urban schools. “The support from

Dra. Nevárez, Dr. Rosas, Dr. LeBrón, and Dr. Flores during my time at UCI's Chc/Lat department was absolutely transformative for me as a first-generation, queer brown femme," Molina said.

She is now completing her first year at UCLA's Teacher Education Program, pursuing both a teaching credential in English and a Master's in Education. She is currently student teaching 9th-grade English at Roosevelt High School in Boyle Heights.

MORE FROM OUR ALUMNI

We asked our alumni how their time at UCI, and in the Chicano/ Latino Studies department, shaped their career paths and their future lives.

Pogos Boyadzhyan

B.A. Chicano Latino Studies
Class of 2011

"The degree has helped me better understand the barriers that people of color face when participating in a 'salad bowl' society that has 'melting pot' tendencies. Having a better understanding of those barriers helps me serve others in a way that helps enhance the experience of those constituents, especially when they are working alongside groups that are historically at an advantage socioeconomically."

Maritza Y Duran

B.A. Chicano/Latino Studies
and Sociology
Class of 2015

"I have been able to obtain my Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology, and it has been a core part of bringing me up to this point in my career."



AND MORE FROM OUR GRAD STUDENTS!

In the 2022-23 school year, several graduate students are working with an Emphasis in Chicano/ Latino Studies. Their varied work promises to add new breakthroughs in their fields.

Geidy Mendez 3rd year Ph.D. Student Political Science

Geidy is researching how socialization between different generations of Latinx communities impacts their sense of trust in politics. Geidy's most current project focuses on how the emotional toll of worry and fear caused by immigration policing shapes ideas about government and civic engagement among U.S.-born Latinx people.

"I decided to enroll in this emphasis because of my research topic," Geidy writes. "As a Guatemalan-American womxn from New Jersey, the emphasis encouraged me to interact with peers and scholarship that provided a geographical and cultural perspective different from my own."

Jes Torres Baker

3rd year Ph.D. student in Urban
Planning & Public Policy

Jes's research focuses on the narratives that surround the process by which immigrant crime victims are granted visas by the government. "I wanted to join the Chicano Latino Studies Emphasis because I felt that it would provide me with a strong foundational approach to researching immigrant communities in the United States.

"As a Chicana, I also felt that the emphasis would be rewarding and nurturing to my own academic journey. And I was right."



WHAT IS OUR FACULTY UP TO?

Meet our newest faculty member,
Christofer Rodelo, Ph.D.



This Fall, the Department of Chicano/Latino Studies welcomed our newest faculty member. Dr. Christofer Rodelo joins us from Harvard University, where he received his PhD in American Studies. A proud first-generation college student and queer scholar, he hails from the Inland Empire. Dr. Rodelo is a performance and literary historian who examines Latinx and Black Latinx expressive cultures in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

GIVING DAY 4/18/2023

Help support our Undergraduates! Are you ready to make a difference? UCI Giving Day is just around the corner, and we invite you to support the programs and initiatives that mean the most to you.

By making a gift or sharing a campaign page, you can help fund scholarships, leading-edge research initiatives, student services, and so much more.

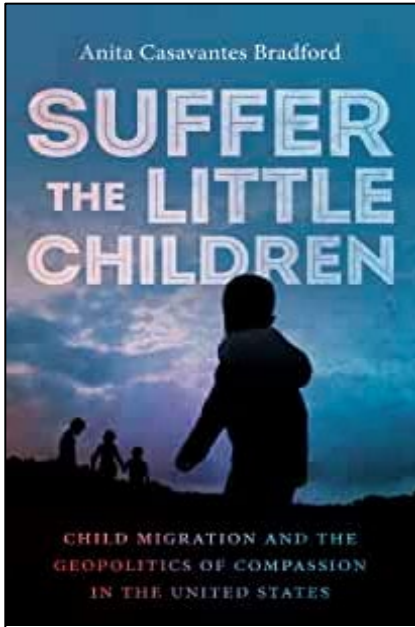
Look for an email from us or check this link to donate:

<https://givingday.uci.edu/chicanolatino>

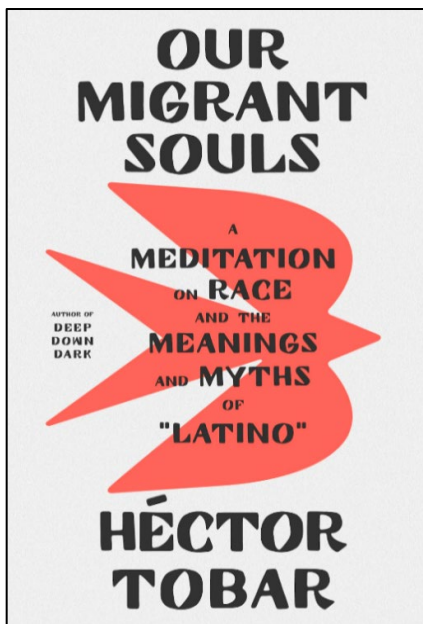
So mark your calendar, get ready to engage with the UCI community, and make a gift that can change lives. Together, let's make a mountain out of an anthill!

**NEW BOOKS
FROM OUR FACULTY**

Anita Casavantes Bradford, Associate Dean of Faculty Development & Diversity and Professor of Chicano/Latino Studies and History has published a new book that looks at how U.S. government officials and migrant advocates have responded to the needs of refugee children.



Héctor Tobar, Professor of Chicano/Latino Studies & English, and Director of Undergraduate Studies has a new book on Latinx identity, out in May. It is about the twenty-first-century Latino experience and identity.



CHC/LAT IN THE NEWS
The ground beneath their feet



Alana LeBron, Assistant Professor of Chicano/Latino Studies and Public Health has overseen research into the lead contamination at a school in Santa Ana, California.

Women's History Month



Ana Elizabeth Rosas, Associate Professor of Chicano/Latino Studies and History reflects on generative qualities of her collaborative community project with El Sol Science and Arts Academy of Santa Ana.

How might district-based elections change voting in Irvine?



Louis DeSipio, Professor of Chicano/Latino Studies and Political Science on how voters in Irvine, California might respond to election reform.

Campos, Sanchez Hernandez earn UCI Spirit Award to study emotional consequences of social mobility

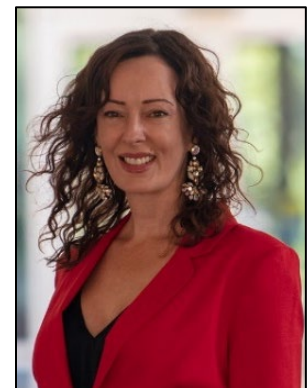


Belinda Campos, Chair and Professor of Chicano/Latino Studies & PRIME LC and Hugo Sanchez, Student will lead a study to track how first-generation college students bridge changing identities and thrive in the university.

UCI to launch pre-health program with support from state of California

Also, Belinda Campos, Chair and Professor of Chicano/Latino Studies & PRIME LC is the principal investigator in the Program in Medical Education in the Latino Community.

Opinion: Re-humanizing the research university



Anita Casavantes Bradford on how research campuses can better serve an increasingly diverse student body.

