WELCOME to the second issue of our CMAS newsletter! Inside you will find information about upcoming events, including the visit of our 2017 Distinguished Speaker Maria Hinojosa, one of the most talented Latina journalists in the country. In today’s charged political environment, policy decisions are being made that critically affect Latin@s in the United States, and Maria Hinojosa will bring her journalistic insight to help inform the UTA and DFW community about these urgent issues. You will also find news from our faculty, exciting interviews, notes from Hispanic student organizations, art work, and more. We hope you enjoy it.

Axolotl aims to serve as link between CMAS and the community at large. By preserving our signs of identity, we honor our cultural roots while at the same time move forward to the future seeking to create new opportunities. Our programs and activities are committed to preserving and nurturing diversity as well as excellence in the Center’s threefold mission of teaching, research, and community service. Our events and partnerships are proof of the energy and commitment of the people engaged in our programs. Como siempre, thanks to the CMAS team who put this issue together!

CHRISTIAN ZLOLNISKI, DIRECTOR

AXOLOTL (a-shó-lo-toll) is an homage to the ancient Aztec mythology. It means change, dialogue and future. Our newsletter aims to be the vehicle for disseminating and promoting events sponsored and organized by CMAS, its members, and the Latino community.
DIA DEL NIÑO

CMAS will sponsor for the third time “El día del niño”, a fabulous event organized by the Department of Modern Languages and the Arlington Public Library. “El día del niño” will be on Saturday, April 29th, 2017 from 1 to 4 pm at the MAC (UTA).

“El día del niño is an event to celebrate childhood and literacy for the entire family. It is a multicultural celebration of children, families, and reading that culminates every year on April 30. The celebration emphasizes the importance of advocating literacy for children of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Hundreds of libraries, schools and communities throughout the country will host celebrations and programs that honor multiculturalism and stress the importance of literacy” (Arlington Public Library website).

In the last two years, children from the Arlington community enjoyed indoor and outdoor activities including the following: storytelling in different languages, Mexican ballet folklórico, clowns, yoga and zumba for kids, snacks, ice cream and sodas, sand castle building, bounce house, face painting, and different tables with a variety of crafts. More than 100 UTA volunteers (including students, faculty and staff), and more than 400 children and families participated in this event each year. All these activities are free of charge and every kid that attends the event receives a free book. Everybody is welcome to this free event sponsored by CMAS! For further information, please contact Dr. Alicia Rueda-Acedo at aliciarueda@uta.edu

MARRIA HINOJOSA, CMAS DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER

One of the most prominent Latina journalists in our country, Maria Hinojosa will deliver a talk titled “Frontlines: Latinos & Immigration from a Woman’s Perspective.” In this insightful and engaging presentation, she speaks about her experiences reporting on immigration for NPR and PBS.

As a woman and a mother, she has a particular interest in how immigration is impacting the mental health of Latinas and their families. She also speaks about how Latinos and Latinas are now the new face of the civil rights movement in the United States.

The talk will take place on Wednesday, April 19th at the Parlor Room-Central Library, 6th Floor, at 6:30 pm. A public reception will follow. This event closes the 2016-2017 CMAS Speaker Series “Re-imagining Boundaries and Gender Identities in the Americas.”
I am happy to announce the publication of my coauthored book *The Third Century: A History of U.S.-Latin American Relations Since 1889*, released in January of 2017. It is the second edition of one of the most widely read histories of the complex relationship between Latin America and the United States. My coauthors are Michael LaRosa of Rhodes College (CMAS Speaker in February, 2017), and the deceased Mark Gilderhus, formerly of Texas Christian University.

*The Third Century’s* narrative begins amid the rapid changes in social, economic, political, and cultural life of the late nineteenth century, when the “New Diplomacy” extended the growing power of the United States throughout the hemisphere and beyond. United States imperialism, both new and traditional, sought to open markets, promote democratic institutions, control territory, and carry out the U.S.’s self-designated role as the civilizers and policemen of the hemisphere. The book continues through the U.S.’s first attempts at foreign nation building in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and the continued effects of older conflicts such as the Mexican-American War on the complex relationships with our closest neighbors. It traces the influence of the Cold War on hemispheric politics and culture. During this period Latin America became the site of ongoing proxy-wars, battles between capitalism and communism, and a reflection of U.S. fears of a global communist conspiracy. The chronological reach of the book brings readers up to the 2016 U.S. presidential election. It ends with some thoughts on the direction of U.S.-Latin American relations moving forward.

As a cultural and social historian of Latin America my primary role in this work is to bring the diverse voices of Latin American political and cultural actors into the conversation about hemispheric diplomatic history. Too often, U.S. Historians flatten Latin American leaders and peoples. They assign pejorative adjectives such as “mercurial,” “passionate,” or “excitable.” This tendency deprives Latin Americans of the supposed rationality and even-handedness imagined for U.S. actions in the region.

It results in a distorted understanding of the perceptions, legacy, and longevity of U.S. policies and a misunderstanding of what has caused conflict in the past. We hope our book contributes to a more nuanced and accurate understanding of our mutual histories and their meanings in the present.
ARLINGTON – Latin America, has had a tumultuous rift between political rule and human rights that has resulted in conquests, wars and blood, all which have left a lasting memory throughout the region.

Colombia, known for its culture, tropical landscapes, and gastronomy, among others, is also known for its history over the land and who gets to control it – the government or the people. For over 50 years, Colombia has waged a civil war that is finally coming to an end after negotiation talks between the government and rebel groups have finally became a reality.

On Thursday, January 9, Rhodes College history associate professor, Dr. Michael LaRosa spoke to students about the decades-long struggle for peace in Colombia at the University of Texas at Arlington’s University Center in a lecture titled “Colombia: Chronicle of a Peace Foretold.”

Dr. Michael LaRosa’s scholarly expertise includes the history of Latin America with a great emphasis on Colombia. He has written and edited many books including his latest textbook, The Third Century: U.S.-Latin American Relations since 1889 that was published this year. He will be releasing a second edition of Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History, which he wrote in collaboration with historian Germán R. Mejia this April, and has plans to continue with his work on U.S. immigration.

Dr. LaRosa was kind enough to allow me to conduct an interview with him. Some of the matters we discussed include his early interest in Colombia, his optimism about the country’s new beginning, and his opinions on immigration issues in the United States. It is interesting to note how certain experiences can forge the course of anyone’s career. Originally from Boston, Massachusetts with Sicilian roots, Dr. LaRosa has always had a fascination with Colombia ever since he first visited the country in 1988. “I kind of fell in love with the country,” said LaRosa of his first time visiting Colombia. “People were very warm, very eager to help, to be open and accept me as part of their family, which stuck with me and it made me want to go back.”

Dr. LaRosa says that he can travel to other Latin-American countries, but his academic home is and will always be Colombia. When he can, he travels back and forth to Colombia and realizes some of his research there where he has an infrastructure set up to where he can access his material and conduct his work. Dr. LaRosa has also taught history courses at three different universities in Colombia. When one thinks of Colombia there seems to be an almost instantaneous connection with Nobel Prize winner and giant writer Gabriel García Márquez.

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When one thinks of Colombia there seems to be an almost instantaneous connection with Nobel Prize winner and giant writer Gabriel García Márquez. The master of magic realism, the literary genre in which the miraculous and reality converge, wrote the famous One Hundred Years of Solitude about the six generations of the Buendía family in Macondo. Although fictional, the events in the novel are very much based on the reality of the history of Latin America. “Macondo is everywhere in Colombia. It really is,” LaRosa said. “You have to suspend reality sometimes and think about things in an alternate reality.”

Dr. LaRosa mentions that what García Márquez was trying to tell us is that the reality inspired by the Europeans in their country is distinct than the reality that is present in Latin America. “Our reality is different. Our history is different,” he says. “And in order to capture that, our literature is going to be different [than the Europeans’]. It’s going to be richer and it’s going to be our own.” One Hundred Years of Solitude also offers a powerful statement against foreign imperialism with the novel’s depiction of the banana plantation massacre inspired by the United Fruit Company tragedy that took place on 1928 in Northern Colombia – the year that Gabriel García Márquez was born.

“There still seems to be an extreme amount of exploitation. García Márquez wrote about it and it’s still real,” said LaRosa referring to coal mining operations and the unequal distribution of land that continues to trouble the country after so many years. Land. It has been a determinant of power in the Americas since the colonial times, but at times in history, avarice has been a big motivator for it. Colombia never had the land redistribution that countries like Mexico had, and Dr. LaRosa reiterates that as fire to the country’s unrest that has permeated for many years. “Land is still a sign of power and strength in Latin America,” LaRosa said.

Other themes that come to mind when thinking about Colombia are the drug lords and crime that have ridden the country. Dr. LaRosa explains that sometimes violence tends to distort and people only see what they are presented with. “Violence does distort. It distorts everything,” he said. “It causes people to not have a correct image of what society is about, but violence excites people – it’s compelling.” Dr. LaRosa does not focus much on that side of Latin-America, instead choosing to focus on the current peace negotiation in Colombia and the hope that the country will prosper, but he did begin his lecture on Thursday about drugs and violence in Latin America that has affected the immigration scene in the United States.

Some people have this misconception that immigration is the problem in this country, but it is the history of this country and that’s how this country was created, he said. Dr. LaRosa further stated that the problems that affect America are presently getting blamed on immigrants because it is always the easier route to go. This strikes a similar tone to the way Mexican immigrants and U.S. citizens of Mexican origin of the late 20s and early 30s were blamed for the economic downturn in America, eventually leading to mass deportations back to Mexico. “In the short term, I don’t feel optimistic about an immigration reform in America,” LaRosa said. “But in the long term, I think I have to be.”

One thing to take when speaking about the government and the people trying to resolve an issue, and which resonated during Dr. LaRosa’s lecture and interview, is that it will always be a struggle. But much like a call for peace in Colombia, for there to be change in any American policy like immigration, there has to be hope. “Without hope, there is nothing,” he said. “There has to be hope for America and, if there is enough pressure from people, things will change.”
PROJECT
MIXED MEDIA

HANDMADE BOOK, PRINTS, WATERCOLOR, DIGITAL, LETTERPRESS, & FOUND OBJECTS

“La Calavera is about communicating in my native language, Spanish, to interpret the idea of self identity. Throughout the book, I explore topics of identify, feminine elements, life, death, and calligraphy. Expressing myself in Spanish to communicate is a sacred form of self-empowerment. This series was largely inspired by José Guadalupe Posada Aguilar, one of my favorite printmakers.”
THIS Spring ‘17 the Center for Mexican American Studies has launched by the first time two internship opportunities to our minors (MAS 4393): The Immigration Counseling and Legal Services, and The Latino Outreach programs.

The Immigration Counseling and Legal Services Program is a collaboration with Proyecto Inmigrante, a non-profit in the Metroplex led by a UTA alumni Douglas Interiano. There is a high degree of anxiety in the Latino community about immigration-related matters, and this internship course provides the student an opportunity to engage in community outreach helping low-income families with their immigration legal needs, assisting in event planning such as immigration forums and immigration informative sessions.

A collaborative effort, the Latino Outreach Program is a course crosslisted with the Department of Modern Languages. This position requires 6 hours per week to be fulfilled through a variety of tasks related to the support of the “Stories to Our Children Program” and “El día del niño” event, both organized by the Arlington Public Library in collaboration with the Department of Modern Languages, and CMAS.

Our 8 interns enrolled in this program are expected to gain meaningful experience in curriculum implementation, event planning, and detailed coordination and communication with families and the school district.

If you want to know about our CMAS internship opportunities, please contact chrisz@uta.edu or iruiz@uta.edu
Sigma Lambda Gamma strives to be the premier organization committed to providing a mechanism of empowerment to all women. We are the Honorable Omicron Beta Chapter of Sigma Lambda Gamma, a group of diverse women dedicated to promoting our principles of academics, community service, cultural awareness, social interaction, morals and ethics on campus. Our aim is to motivate and empower young women on the UT-Arlington campus to become a better version of themselves, and to continue our motto of women empowerment even after graduation. We hold various activities throughout the year many of which are partnered with other organizations on campus to promote Greek unity. Our 12th annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk is on April 1st at the University Center and it will start at 9:30 am. You are all welcome to attend!

The Latin American Student Organization (LASO) promotes the Latino culture on campus, we are a social organization that connects Latinos together through social events, sports, and community service events. Since a lot of us are first generation students, we help one another and try to create a family feel. We also mentor younger students, guys and girls from freshmen to seniors by helping and informing each other about all the different things UTA has to offer. We organize our LASO Lunes weekly meetings on campus, as well as events open to the public like Dia De los Muertos, and our Awards Banquet. We participate in UTA traditions like bed races and oozeball, and give our members opportunities to bond with each other on different kinds of environments. Some of our most recent events are volunteering at the North Texas Irish Festival on March 4th and an ISO skating mixer to get to know the international students at UTA on March 8th, as well as intramural games throughout the week. You do not have to be Latino to join, we welcome all cultures to come and share their stories with us!
**DR. ANA GREGORIO-CANO** published the book chapter “What does a translator trainee need to know? Voices from the Translation classroom” in peer-reviewed book Diseños en la moderna investigación universitaria (McGraw-Hill, 2016). This chapter analyzes an answer of more than a thousand answers from Translation students where they point out the main competences a translator trainee needs in order to fulfill the translation profession. Dr. Gregorio-Cano also published the book chapter “The student’s productivity as a direct result of his/her learning: an assessment guide” in peer-reviewed book Aula virtual: contenidos y elementos (McGraw-Hill, 2016). The chapter offers an effective assessment guide for an introductory course of Translation from a double perspective, both for the trainer and the student.

Moreover, Dr. Gregorio-Cano’s article “International protection in Melilla: the role of the interpreter in the asylum interview on the southern border of Europe” will be published in peer-reviewed journal Entreculturas (vol. 9, 2017). This article offers a panoramic view of the situation of the interpreter in international protection processes in the city of Melilla, focusing on the role of the interpreter in the asylum and refuge interviews. In addition, her article “The Translation and Interpreting Students’ Profile in First and Final Year as a Key Element in Translator Competence’s Development” was accepted by peer-reviewed journal Hermeneus (forthcoming, 2018). Based on an empirical study, this paper discusses the entrance and exit student profile of Translation and Interpreting (TI) studies within Spanish Higher Education context.

**DR. DAVID LAFEVER** published the book The Third Century: A History of U.S.-Latin American Relations. He also presented scholarly papers invited by the University of Alabama, the University of Colorado, and the Hutchins Center of Harvard University and at several conferences, including the American Historical Association. He continues to direct the digital humanities project, “Siete Villas de Cuba”, which locates, digitizes, and preserves Cuban documents pertinent to the African slave trade.

**DR. ERIN MURRAH-MANDRIL** presented at the 25th anniversary conference for the “Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project” in Houston, TX. Her presentation, titled “Re-membering Mexican American Literary Inheritance,” examined the structure of Latina/o literary history for literature written before the Chicano Movement. In addition, Dr. Erin Murrah-Mandril created the online version of MAS 2300 core course with support from UTA Instructional Designer, Brittany Usman. This class for Mexican American Studies Minors is the first UTA online course to receive certification from Quality Matters, an international non-profit organization that evaluates online courses through a professional peer-review.

**DR. IGNACIO RUIZ-PÉREZ** delivered the keynote speech “Relación de los hechos de José Carlos Becerra: cine, modernidad y melancolía” in the XIII Encuentro Iberoamericano de Poesía “Carlos Pellicer Cámar” (Tabasco, Mexico). Dr. Ruiz-Pérez talk focused on the impact of mass media in the articulation of an alienated and fragmented modern subjectivity. In addition, he focused on the nostalgia apparent in the individual subject after the loss of his sense of unity with nature in Becerra’s poetry. Dr. Ruiz-Pérez was also invited to conduct two poetry readings at the same event.

**DR. CHRISTIAN ZLOLNISKI** delivered an invited talk in February at the 2017 David Walsh Arts and Sciences Seminar Series at Clarkson University in Potsdam, NY. His talk “Fresh Produce, Water Scarcity, and Social Conflict in a Rural Community in Northern Mexico” discussed how the production of fresh produce in Baja California for consumer markets in the United States has contributed to the rapid depletion of the local aquifers, generating water shortages for the indigenous farmworkers who produce them, and leading to social unrest and political protests in this region.