THE DEPARTMENT OF
INDIGENOUS, RACE
AND ETHNIC STUDIES

Newsletter
2020 - 2021

WHERE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE MEETS SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies Dept
104 Alder Building
5268 University of Oregon
818 E 15th Ave
Eugene, OR 97403-5268
ethnicstudies.uoregon.edu
Our mission is to abolish white supremacy through scholarship and creative expression, fostering community, and providing students with the intellectual tools to help fulfill their potential as historical actors creating a more just world.

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The Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies will roll out its long-awaited graduate program this fall. After more than a decade of deliberation, consultation, and planning, IRES now offers a graduate certificate and is accepting the first round of applications for the PhD program. IRES Core Faculty are excited to collaborate more closely with our Graduate Faculty to guide the next generation of scholars into the academic fray, with cutting edge transdisciplinary and intersectional training on the most compelling issues of justice and inequity facing the world today.

The certificate program is available to graduate students in other departments at University of Oregon who want to have a legible, concentrated focus on race, Indigeneity, and intersectional theories. Students will acquire tools to address their own disciplinary research from an IRES perspective, helping them generate scholarship with greater social impact while making them more attractive candidates in the academic job market.

Applications for the IRES PhD program opened in the fall term with a deadline of December 15, 2020. Our first cohort will begin in the fall term of 2021. Hundreds of inquiries poured in over the summer already, from “people who are invested in seeing real institutional change, and who are excited, and want to teach, to keep that institutional change going. Systemic racism, intersectional theory, queer race studies, Indigenous studies – these are where the field is at, and where we need to go, given this moment of increasing consciousness,” according to Professor Lynn Fujiwara. Recent high-profile incidents of police violence against Black people underscore an ongoing pattern of systemic racism and oppression, echoing all too brutally what scholars in our field have been saying for a long time. Students see it, too, and are eager and passionate to pursue Indigenous, race, and ethnic studies here at the University of Oregon with the hopes of generating new knowledge and cultivating the next generation of leaders and scholars in our field.
There were no Native faculty at Brian Klopotek’s undergraduate institution, and only two other Native students in his graduating class of about 1200. What diversity infrastructure existed never included Native students at that time and consistently lumped Natives and Chicanxs together. While he valued those connections and coalitions, he also set to work to build the infrastructure that was missing, starting with a simple request for a rolodex to pass along contact information for drums, speakers, and vendors so Native students didn’t have to start over every time someone graduated. He could plainly see the ways institutional structures mattered in the lives of Native students, and he could see that Native people needed to occupy university positions to make that happen more effectively. So he set out on a path to fill that role for other people.

Klopotek began teaching at University of Oregon in 2003, a time when he hadn’t quite finished his dissertation and the Ethnic Studies program had yet to become a department. Fast forward seventeen years and he has published three books as he steps into the role of Department Head for Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies. Along the way, he has also sought to build infrastructure to help BIPOC students to thrive in the academic world.

Klopotek spent the last ten years developing, implementing, and directing the Native American Studies Program with colleagues at the University of Oregon, and working as a faculty co-director for the NAIS ARC (Native American and Indigenous Studies Academic Residential Community), roles that prepared him for the challenging work of a leadership position in IRES. Programs like IRES and NAIS provide visible intellectual spaces where students know they can find classes addressing the realities of BIPOC lives, with all the struggles, rewards, pain, and beauty they entail.

The ARC, he says, allows students to quickly become acquainted with all of the Native staff and faculty on campus and the Native American Student Union instead of stumbling across them by chance. Most NAIS-ARC students are housed on the same floor in Kalapuya Ilihi Hall, the new dorm next to the Many Nations Longhouse, where they find the kinds of cultural supports and emotional bonds that support first-year retention. While the NAIS-ARC is predominantly comprised of Native students and geared toward Native student retention by design, it is open to any student with an interest in Native studies, and non-Indians of various racial and ethnic backgrounds have found a welcoming home in the ARC. Klopotek’s philosophy is that Native studies, like ethnic and racial studies more broadly, is for everybody. “We will always need people from outside of our communities who are educated about our goals to advocate with us and...
for us.” For this reason, he addresses coalitional anti-racism in all of his classes, including segments on Black-Indian relations, for example, to understand how we’re all affected by each other’s actions.

In the Spring of 2020, looking ahead, he reflected on his new post as the Department Head of IRES by saying that he views the position as “a service position” and imagines that many faculty feel the same way. “The leadership style of many Indigenous peoples where I come from is very much oriented towards service, so it’s about doing work for others rather than being anyone’s boss,” Professor Klopotek states. He believes the role of Department Head fits that mold, as well.

As fall 2020 gets underway, Professor Klopotek acknowledges the significance of the new IRES Graduate Program. “Within the Department, there is a lot coming up right now, in that we are about to have a graduate program for the first time, which is a lot of work. I won’t be doing that on my own, by any means—Professor Lynn Fujiwara will be acting as Director of Graduate Studies and doing a lot of that heavy lifting. Still, it is a part of what I expect to be dealing with most in the coming couple of years.” Klopotek embraces this expansion, and reveals that there is a Native Studies major in the makings, too. The planned major will cover Native American and Indigenous Studies, to broaden the scope of study and make it more comprehensive and inclusive of Pacific and Latinx Indigeneities, in particular. He elaborates by saying that there would likely be an Indigenous language requirement, an addition that adds depth and hue to people’s understanding of Indigenous lives. Currently, the University of Oregon offers two years of coursework in Ichishkiin, the heritage language of Yakama people, related closely to other Sahaptin languages of eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, and Idaho. Students will also be able to fulfill this requirement with Chinuk Wawa classes offered at Lane Community College, Indigenous languages taught at other universities, and through certification processes available at the University of Oregon for other languages.

Above all else, whether in the midst of the pandemic or under normal circumstances, he values the importance of “advocating for and protecting departmental faculty and staff and our students, in the best way possible in this institutional climate.” That means helping to solve new problems as they occur as well as fostering the creation of new opportunities. Some opportunities that students have had in the past, such as fieldtrips with Professor Jennifer O’Neal to places such as the Warm Springs and Burns Paiute reservations for example, might be put on hold for now, but the rise of Zoom also creates new opportunities to connect with tribal communities in different places, as students in her NAIS-ARC seminar did in Spring 2020.

Kalapuya Ilihi Hall is named in honor of the Kalapuya, the Indigenous people of the Willamette Valley. The building is adjacent to the Many Nations Longhouse and features art by Native American artists from the region.

“Be stubborn, be persistent, be humble, be gracious, be guided by your vision and your community vision, and you’ll be amazed by what you can create.”
Klopotek’s overarching goal for IRES students, beyond the obvious elements of disciplinary knowledge, is to instill in them a strong sense of agency, responsibility, and connection. “Be stubborn, be persistent, be humble, be gracious, be guided by your vision and your community vision, and you’ll be amazed by what you can create.”

Ron Reed, Karuk traditional knowledge keeper and dipnet fisherman, gave a guest lecture for ES 350 Native Americans and Environmentalism, made more special by the fact that his son Ryan (NAS minor) was a student in the class. Left to right, Ron Reed, Robyn Reed, Ryan Reed, Violet Johnson, Jessica Douglas, and Stacia Henry.
Laura Pulido Passes The Baton

Professor Laura Pulido wrapped up her three-year term as Department Head for IRES in September 2020, serving with grace through some difficult institutional times and the feral, indiscriminate houseguest taking up space in all of our lives – COVID-19. When asked how the pandemic impacted the Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies, Dr. Pulido noted its “huge impact on our faculty, staff, and students. Of course, when we went into remote mode, in the Spring, that was largely unanticipated, and only two or three of us had any kind of experience doing that kind of teaching.” This sense of unpreparedness echoed throughout campus, and to a greater extent, the world. The department, like nearly everyone else, collectively had to navigate new technologies in order to adapt to continually evolving circumstances. While some fields may emerge potentially revolutionized, Pulido suggests that education will not be one of them. “I’ve really become confident that online teaching will not replace in person instruction. That doesn’t mean there’s not a role for online, because I absolutely think that there is, and we are continuing to pursue and develop that.” She notes that many of the topics explored in IRES courses require robust conversation and a level of trust among students, but also between them and the faculty. The educational process in IRES classes is founded on hard conversations, and the sterile, stilted nature of Zoom sessions breaks down the formula. How difficult it is to passionately state your case with the lag and buffering that computers and conferencing platforms bring. Further, the removal of face-to-face interaction between faculty and students deprives everybody of the mentoring and teaching that occurs in office hours and in hallway conversations – an integral part of the whole equation.

Another indelible aspect of 2020 has been the intensified visibility of police brutality and the culture of White supremacy in the United States. The spotlight on race underlines the importance of projects such as Pulido’s “Foundational White Supremacy in Landscapes of US Historical Commemoration.” In September of 2019, the National Science Foundation awarded Pulido a grant to support her vision – a project that takes a deep dive into the ways commemorations end up largely erasing or covering up the history of White supremacy in the United States. The scope of this
exploration covers statues, historical plaques, and landmarks that glamorize figures who were instrumental in the most brutish transgressions of slavery, colonization, genocide, and conquest. As an example, she found that in Los Angeles, where her project began, there were an egregious few sites dedicated to Mexican and Indigenous populations while numerous monuments attested to White accomplishments. Her project illuminates a deep-seated desire to cover up the extraordinary levels of violence, coercion, racial prejudice, and illicit bribery Whites used historically to attain the wealth they currently enjoy as a whole.

The idea for this project originated from a book that Pulido wrote with two former doctoral students, A People’s Guide to Los Angeles, which is “a radical tour guide that documents sites of racial, class, gender, and environmental struggle in LA County’s history and landscape.” Since the publication of this book, editions on Boston and San Francisco have come out, and more volumes focusing on other towns and cities are in the works.

With her headship of the department ending in mid-September, she reflects on the experience. “It has been a big learning experience being the Department Head. I came in being the Department Head when I was new to the University of Oregon.” She recalls feeling the full weight of this challenge for at least the first quarter of year one. Every day there were new acronyms, new roles of colleagues and university administrators to remember. Learning the university was like a research project in itself, but this trial by fire helped her to better understand how IRES fits into the University of Oregon as a whole. Pulido observed, time and again, how IRES “punches above its weight” judging by the evidence of its impact on campus in comparison with its size.
As spring term of 2020 drew to a close, new departmental assistant Sydney Wensel had a virtual meeting with Sharon Luk, Associate Professor of IRES and the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the department. Luk’s 2017 book, *The Life of Paper: Letters and a Poetics of Living Beyond Captivity*, won two major national awards: the American Studies Association’s Lora Romero First Book Prize and the Modern Language Association’s Matei Calinescu Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in 20th/21st Century Thought. In this interview, Wensel asks about the book as well as current projects and her work in the department.


**Introduction**

**THE LIFE OF PAPER**

access

involved in writing

my history

i’ve been waking in

night sweats &

it’s not the sheets,

those things in-

side are

burning out

of love

17 June 2009

Sharon Luk (SL): Well, it’s a book that looks at how people facing some of the most intense forms of systematic violence and isolation have used letters to remake their communal life. It focuses specifically on California’s history of racism and incarceration and places these processes in global context. So, in the broadest sense, I use letters as a window to understand how the violence came to be (if we can admit that it’s not somehow “just the way it is”), and also to honor the ways that communities struggle to sustain themselves and create present and future possibilities.

SW: And, can you mention or give brief detail on any current research projects or soon to come research projects?
SL: I’m working on a couple of ongoing projects that have been delayed due to the global crisis, although I’m also curious to see how this moment may change future directions of the thinking and research. One book project interrogates the brief but powerful encounter between social justice leaders Thich Nhat Hanh and Martin Luther King, Jr. I’m interested in how meditating over this exchange can generate new ways to think about big questions like the politics of death, the logics of racial category, and our senses of intellectual heritage. Another long-term project I’m always sort of working on is what someone in my distinctive position (in terms of my personal history, scholarly training, political commitments) might bring to bear on the horizons and stakes of a Chinese intellectual tradition. I find this particularly relevant in the twenty-first century as so much global violence is done in the name of this tradition, whether that violence be perpetrated by Chinese state and capitalist parties or by rival counterparts in the U.S. and elsewhere who claim to be fixing the so-called “Chinese problem.”

SW: Do you, as the Director of Undergraduate Studies, have any thoughts on how the advising process with undergraduate students, might look slightly different, for those you know want to enter the PhD or Graduate Certificate Programs down the line? Or do you think it will remain completely the same?

SL: I don’t think anything remains completely the same under any conditions! But I don’t think it will transform much insofar as undergraduate advising often already looks differently for every student who needs advising. All of our students come from their own unique backgrounds and work under all kinds of circumstances and have all kinds of future goals and potential obstacles. So, the process has rarely if ever been a “one-size-fits-all,” although we do have a general set of major and minor requirements that all of our students are expected to fulfill, and which thereby connect all of our students as an intellectual community. But the way they move through our program of study is almost always going to look different for each person, and I can’t see it continuing any other way our department grows. Advising, at least as I’ve been doing it so far, is simply trying to figure out what the student needs to do in order to get to where they want to go. Of course, this also involves identifying what our sum resources are and how IRES can support that student to move along. Sometimes this can get tricky because what we need and what we want are not always the same thing! So there’s also the aspect of struggling with the student through that difference. The trials and tribulations of preparing for graduate training seems to heighten that angst sometimes.

With this in mind, Luk creates a space that encourages every student to walk their own path. She advises with the goal of aiding and enriching their journey to the end of the path they desire. It is always an open, productive discourse that she fosters with her student advisees. Her approach is a balance of remembering the degree requirements in order to ensure that a student is on track to graduate in their desired timeframe, so she never comes to the table with an unalterable agenda. Instead she bears in mind the mantra of Thich Nhat Hanh, “In true dialogue, both sides are willing to change.”
Next Stop, 1984:
Courtney Cox On Technology Taking Over Sports

Professor Courtney M. Cox joined the UO Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies family in the 2019-2020 academic year. Her work focuses on labor, globalization, and technology through the world of sports. Before entering academia, Cox worked for ESPN in Bristol, Connecticut, and for the Longhorn Network in Austin, Texas. She also spent time in Los Angeles at NPR-affiliate KPCC and with the WNBA’s Los Angeles Sparks. Her work and research collide in the classroom, where she uses the cultural connection of sport to engage students in broader critical discourses surrounding identity and representation.

Cox acknowledges that many see sport through a Marxist critique as an “opiate of the masses,” merely a distraction from oppressive structures, not to be taken too seriously. She begs to differ, seeing it as a pathway to discussing more difficult topics. “There are people that are terrified to talk about race, but the very blatant way that the body is on display, and that we can’t look away from it, or the way we look at ownership, using the term owner, we don’t use that in other fields, like this person owns this team, or this roster.” She examines who can be an owner of a team, who can be a player, what this historically looks like and why. This marriage of the hot button topics and sports is her way of “sliding the vegetables in with the dessert.”

Professor Cox is currently engaged in three research projects. She is working on a monograph focused on women’s basketball around the world. She has conducted research in Los Angeles, California; Paris, France; and Kazan, Russia. Across each site, she considers how Black women navigate the White heteropatriarchal space of sport, choreographing new possibilities for themselves and one another. This work centers the athlete voice to contribute to performance studies, feminist theory, and cultural studies scholarship.

Her next project, titled “Take That for Data: Advanced Analytics in Sport,” examines the role of technology in the current sports landscape, whether in algorithms, wearable technology, or gambling. She delves into how closely these technologies can monitor and dissect our lives and habits for both amateur and professional athletes alike. She examines the question of who has the right to access this data that is constantly being collected. As these wearable technologies shift under pandemic to track COVID-19 as much as they track athletic performance, she examines how they can serve as both a form of safety as well as a more insidious kind of surveillance.

Finally, Cox is working on a collaborative digital humanities project with music scholar Perry B. Johnson. Titled *The Sound of Victory: Music, Sport, and Society*, the duo has recently launched a website ([thesoundofvictory.org](http://thesoundofvictory.org), @thesoundofvictory on Instagram) where they explore the various intersections of music and sport. Whether in music videos, fashion, soundtracks, or sports venues, these two forms of entertainment are constantly colliding. Their work examines spaces such as the Super Bowl halftime show, the pregame performance of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” and local sites such as Venice Beach, California.

Because much of Dr. Cox’s work uses interviews and field observation as methods, much of her research is on hold under restrictions of the pandemic. Two of her research sites planned for 2020—March Madness and the Summer Olympics—were taken completely off the table. However, with the increasing use of platforms such as Zoom and Skype, she continues to engage with athletes, journalists, and advocates, albeit from a distance. As sport slowly returns, with varying adjustments, to adapt to pandemic, uprising, and other global shifts, Cox’s work reflects how we can best understand these shifts through an ethnic studies lens.
Lynn Fujiwara began working at the University of Oregon in 2000, so she has been an integral part of the work of the Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies Department for over two decades now. Through her consistently outstanding classes, she demonstrates and teaches critical thought on questions of race and ethnicity as they intersect with immigration, gender, sexuality, and other vectors of power. She has been a leader in both the department and the university in developing online education options. As a result, the University of Oregon administration has called on her expertise to help other faculty learn to better demonstrate care for their students in remote-learning classes this fall. Professor Fujiwara has nurtured this practice in IRES classes, where students are so often working through raw emotions on topics that hit especially close to home. Demonstrating care in these pivotal moments is critical to keeping students in the conversation and invested in their college education, and her capacity in this area is just one of the reasons she was recently recognized with an Excellence in Remote Teaching Award for Spring 2020.

Beyond the classroom, Professor Fujiwara conducts thought-provoking research that asks pressing questions for our world. In November 2018, she co-edited a book with colleague Shireen Roshanravan, titled *Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Politics*. When teaching classes on Women of Color feminisms, they both were somewhat perplexed on how to teach Asian American feminisms specifically. A defined epistemological feminist framework is underdeveloped in Asian American Studies because it is such a heterogenous field that, she says, to even use the phrase “Asian American feminisms” can be problematic. The book was created to speak to this disconnection, to recognize it, and to identify the reasons the field was still so amorphous. The collection addresses the question of what an Asian American feminist praxis might be, and how it relates to Women of Color feminisms as a political movement. Fujiwara acknowledges that the book is not written as a solution or an answer, but rather a participatory gesture and a desire for discussion. She is currently working on another volume to expand this discussion and engage Asian American queer theory and resistance, as well.
As Director of Graduate Studies for IRES, Fujiwara has taken a leading role in shaping the new graduate certificate and PhD program. The graduate program has been a long time in the making, as she said the conversation surrounding it started about a decade ago. At that time, CAS Dean Scott Coltrane proposed the idea to the department, indicating observations of keen and widespread interest to support it. The award-winning faculty of IRES had already all been serving on graduate student committees and providing graduate instruction and mentorship, effectively doing work for other departments without receiving any credit or having any control over the admissions process. After surveying graduate programs around the country, IRES recognized that there was room for them to play a larger role in training the next generation of faculty in the field. IRES faculty, led by Fujiwara and Professor Ernesto Martínez, developed a set of plans and goals for what the program could be. An external review of the program proposal by three leading faculty in the field from other institutions confirmed that a department this strong could not live up to its full potential without a graduate program. It was unanimously settled among IRES faculty and the university administration that the department should be participating in “the reproduction and the building of our fields” through doctoral education.

Professors Fujiwara and Martínez walked the IRES graduate program plan through the approval process, working with the State of Oregon’s Higher Education Coordinating Committee and the UO Faculty Senate along the way. After thorough revision and review, the PhD program was finally approved in summer 2019. Over the summer of 2020, Professor Fujiwara fielded hundreds of inquiries about the program from potential applicants across the country. The application portal is now open, with the application deadline set for December 15, 2020. After that date, faculty will convene to review the applications and select the first cohort of five fully funded students to begin in the fall of 2021. More information about the graduate program can be found on the IRES website, including a YouTube video of a recent informational session organized by Professor Fujiwara and Professor Courtney Cox.
Alai Reyes-Santos, Professor of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies, as well as Conflict Resolution at the Law School, has been with this department for 15 years. Reyes-Santos is also a writer, consultant, facilitator, and an Iya-high priestess of Afro-Caribbean regla de osha and regla conga.

Over this past year, she has been working on three projects. One is a book manuscript entitled *Oceanic Whispers: Stories of Mothering and Kinship in the Black Diaspora*, a narrative that delves into engaging accounts of mothering in the Black Diaspora. In the project, she deploys “pataki—the Black Diasporic sacred stories—to reimagine what motherhood means for women and queer-identified Afro-Diasporic peoples as caretakers of biological and chosen kin.”

Her second major enterprise is a digital project called *Caribbean Women Healers: Decolonizing Knowledge Within Afro-Indigenous Traditions*, launched April 22 to an enthusiastic audience over Zoom. Around 300 people witnessed the launch and more continue to access it through Knight Library. This project engages in the decolonization of knowledge production and digital dissemination through an Afro-Indigenous Caribbean lens. The research by Reyes-Santos and her Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies partner, Professor Ana-Maurine Lara, required examination of their own beliefs, values, and experiences of what the world is, in order to fully participate in “healing and social change from the perspective of Afro-Indigenous healers.” This was not a mere observe-and-record operation, so to speak, but rather an immersive dialogue.

Her third project, the *Oregon Water Futures: Rural Indigenous Communities and People of Color* collaboration with Oregon Environmental Council, Willamette Partnership, and Coalition of Communities of Color, is due to complete its consultation process by December of 2020, in time to impact the 2021 legislative process. The project involves consulting Indigenous peoples and rural communities of color about their water needs and culturally-specific approaches to water. Due to the pandemic, most of the consultation will occur through Zoom focus groups and phone conversations, and much of the research is being undertaken by interns, with findings that “will be used to develop a water justice framework pertinent to the state of Oregon.”

In addition to all of this and her work within IRES, her involvement in UO Law School’s Conflict and Dispute Resolution (CRES) Program speaks volumes about her desire for change in the direction of social equality. She does not shy away from the tough topics and teaches a course through the law school that “engages how power dynamics, social violence, and cultural difference impact conflict and how conflict is engaged by all parties. The course emphasizes concepts such as race, gender, class, ethnonational identities, ability/disability, religion, colonialism, genocide, and slavery.” Reflecting on her time with the program, she says, “It has been a life changing experience to teach CRES students and see them use the conceptual and theoretical frameworks we discuss in the development of projects that contribute to advocacy efforts around detention centers, climate justice, water justice, criminalization of youth of color, and many other topics in the U.S. and all over the world. The constant engagement of both international and national perspectives in the classroom keeps me on my toes and turns teaching into an exciting adventure where I learn constantly from my students.”
Only a milliner can claim to have taken on as many hats as Professor Michael Hames-García. A tenured professor, they have been with the Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies for nearly 15 years. What’s more, they have the distinction of being the first Department Head – a position they held until 2011. Most recently, they have been active as Vice President for Equity and Diversity for the UO faculty union. They currently serve in the community as a member of the City of Eugene’s Civilian Review Board, examining police conduct. Despite these responsibilities, and their teaching responsibilities, they find time for their own research and writing.

In the past year, their institutional efforts have centered on the development of a minor in Latinx studies, part of a new program providing a deeper dive into the study of Latinx cultures, peoples, and lives. They have also demonstrated their dedication to Latinx students by serving as the faculty member in charge of the Latinx Academic Residential Community (ARC) in 2019-2020, helping to create a familiar, welcoming environment that introduces first-year Latinx student to the University of Oregon.

Hames-García’s research and teaching have focused on racism in the criminal justice system for years, with their first book on the topic, Fugitive Thought: Prison Movements, Race, and the Meaning of Justice, coming out in 2004, and one of their most popular classes, ES 352: Social Equity and Criminal Justice, informing thousands of Oregon under-graduates. When continuing incidents of police violence against Black people triggered enormous protests in Eugene and the world, Hames-García participated in Black Lives Matter teach-ins and advocated in the Daily Emerald and the University of Oregon Senate for disarmament and greater oversight for the University of Oregon Police Department. Their knowledge and deep commitment to protecting BIPOC lives from police brutality have made Hames-García an exceptionally valuable member of the IRES faculty in times when people are dying from failed policies.

Hames-García is currently collecting data for a new book on the topic tentatively titled Not What We Had in Mind: Policing and the Limits of Community Oversight. Their research compares external oversight of law enforcement in three locations: Eugene, Oregon; Los Angeles County, California; and British Columbia, Canada. Police oversight is resisted by police unions as enfeebling and derided by abolitionists as concessionary; yet it has been touted as the gold standard for policing reform since the 1967 Kerner Commission. Dr. Hames-García argues that community-based demands for police accountability in moments of crisis too often get displaced by local planning mechanisms intended to achieve transparency in formal reviews of police conduct. In other words, procedural fairness emerges as an ideal for local planners, while community organizers and activists hope for substantive justice. The goals of official policy makers can thus become obstacles to the goals of community activists, although both understand themselves to be pursuing the end of improving external oversight of the police.

Professor Hames-García has become an integral member of the IRES family, and they will be sorely missed when they leave in the summer of 2021 to start a new chapter as a Professor of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Their tireless work towards the brighter future they imagine, and their encouragement to those around them to join in active participation, have been an inspiration to their colleagues and students.
Charise Cheney wins teaching award!

In May of 2018, Professor Charise Cheney was one of three faculty members out of the entire College of Arts and Sciences to be awarded the Tykeson Teaching Award for 2018. Philip Scher, the Divisional Dean for Social Sciences, stated that, “Charise exemplifies all the best qualities in a teacher: passion, dedication, deep knowledge of her subject matter and the ability to communicate these things to her students. When I was reviewing her nomination, I was struck by the comments of the students who were effusive in their praise and consistent in their declarations that Dr. Cheney, quite simply, changed their lives.” IRES students consistently benefit from Professor Cheney’s vision and commitment in the classroom.

Cheney’s classes are always informed by her own award-winning research. In one current project, for example, she explores the question of how Black people thought about the question of how to ensure quality education for Black children in public schools. Her soon to be completed manuscript, *Blacks vs. Brown: The Black Anti-Integration Movement in Topeka, KS, 1941-1954*, surveys the decade before the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* Supreme Court decision as Black communities debated the value of maintaining the city’s all-Black schools in the face of pervasive anti-Blackness. The Black community-at-large was against state-sanctioned segregation but large segments of the community sought to preserve all-Black schools to protect the well-being of Black children holistically. This moment in history speaks to contemporary social justice movements that challenge anti-Blackness in its various manifestations while debating the paths we might take to achieve wellness for Black people.

Another area of emphasis for Cheney’s research has been articulations of race and gender in music. Her first book, *Brothers Gonna Work It Out: Sexual Politics in the Golden Age of Rap Nationalism*, examined the ways Black hip hop artists both supported and resisted dominant cultural narratives of Blackness and Black masculinity. In her teaching, she examines how gender and sexual politics within hip hop has evolved since the “golden age of rap nationalism.” While the genre continues to speak to how White supremacy shapes Black cultural production, Black creatives continue to both reinforce and subvert dominant cultural expectations. Her popular Race and Sex in Hip-Hop class talks about histories of anti-Black discourse and practices, and how they reverberate throughout contemporary pop cultural consumption and production.
Cheney’s next research project explores the relationship between the cultural production and racialized consumption of African dance and drum in the West. Specifically, this project examines White and Black Americans’ imaginings of “Africa” and “African culture” and how those Western projections influence African cultures and cultural workers. The drum and dance scene in the United States has become a site of contestation for White and Black Americans, particularly women, who claim “African” culture as a space of reclamation and regeneration of their racial and/or sexual subjectivities. Her work interrogates how the consumption and appropriation of “African” culture is informed by White supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy in the U.S. and how the commodification of West African cultures has been shaped by colonialism, imperialism, and neo-imperialism in West Africa.

The history of Oregon as a Whites-only state has powerfully shaped what it means to be Black in Eugene and at the University of Oregon. As a result of the racial exclusion policy and the ideology that created it, Oregon has a small Black population in comparison with other states, and a deeply ingrained White supremacy that is at times overt, at times covert, and at times unconscious. For Cheney, as one of only a few Black faculty on campus who specialize in Black studies, this set of circumstances has meant a significant burden and responsibility. She has been a leader on campus in advocating for coalitional anti-racism, even as she advocates for the expansion of Black faculty and Black studies specialists and works to protect the well-being of all Black students on campus. Her teaching, research, collegiality, and leadership make her a treasured faculty member in IRES and the campus community.

“In her book, Cheney tries to dispel the notion that all rap music is about sex, violence and bling. . . . The book is insightful particularly to white Americans who don’t get the appeal of Louis Farrakhan or to older African-Americans whose knowledge of black music stops at Smokey Robinson. After reading this book, both groups might at least be tempted to sample some Public Enemy music.” - The San Luis Obispo Tribune
IRES faculty and friends gathered by Zoom this summer to watch and celebrate the premiere of Professor Ernesto Martínez’s short film, *La Serenata*, on HBO. The short film is based on his endearing and award-winning children’s book, *Cuando Amamos, Cantamos: When We Love Someone, We Sing to Them*, about a boy who asks his musical father if there are any songs “for a boy who loves a boy.” The father in the book hems and haws a bit before reassuring his son he will find a song, his love for his son compelling him to create a space for the boy to express his own fluttering heart. The cinematic version takes us deeper into the father’s sense of conflict and eventual resolution to support his son and to help him lay his heart out to his crush in a serenade. He is in the process now of creating a feature-length screenplay based on the premise as the project advances.

The film and book are both part of his Femeniños Project (www.femeninos.com) to produce “literature and film for queer Latino/x youth and their familias.” The project is motivated by his own experiences of alienation and longing for affirmation from his Latinx family as he came to understand himself as a boy who loved other boys. The Femeniños Project includes a composite of written and visual works by him and his colleagues to make visible the psychological harms that come to queer youth of color when they are invalidated by their own cultural communi-ties, and to help create a future where they never again have to question whether their feelings are valid and good or whether their familias cherish them.

The creative process that accompanied the production of *La Serenata* stands in stark contrast to the creative processes Martínez had become so accustomed to as an academic writer. Working collaboratively with the movie’s director and production company came with a steep learning curve, even as it provided a refreshing change of pace. Working with a group often requires a delicate balancing act of factoring in all opinions, allowing voices to be heard, and shaping a vision that results in the best outcome for the group.

His creative work, a public-facing application of his academic work, continues unabated. This summer, Martínez finished a fellowship at Sesame Workshop Writer’s Room in New York City, where he developed his first animated, magical realist adventure mini-series for pre-teens about children crossing the US-Mexico border. In the execution of this project, like in the writing of his book *When We Love Someone We Sing to Them*, he once again demonstrates that childlike wonderment can coexist with topics of exceeding depth, and the presence of one does not have to undo the other. It can be a tightrope act to tell a story about a child, from a child’s point of view, and for children when the topic at hand is politically charged and maybe even jarring for some, but Martínez knows that makes it that much more important to do it well.

Professor Martínez doesn’t imagine transitioning to a full-time edutainment industry career. IRES provides a stable and protected base for him to address the work of the Femeniños Project, and training future generations of scholars, teachers, activists, and political workers in the college classroom still feeds his soul. But Professor Martínez represents a growing trend among IRES scholars of figuring out ways to push for critical interrogation and social change through both academic work and public-facing projects.
In fall 2019 Jennifer O’Neal joined the Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies as an Assistant Professor. Prior to her arrival, her career included positions at the U.S. Department of State’s Office of the Historian, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, and most recently as the University Historian at the University of Oregon. In this position, she developed an innovative research project documenting the often untold and hidden stories of underrepresented student groups on campus. This project led to the creation of an online tour site titled “Untold Stories: The Hidden History of the University of Oregon” (https://hiddenhistory.uoregon.edu) that provides curriculum and self-guided tours of these important sites.

O’Neal’s research research focuses on an interdisciplinary approach to examining the social, political, and historical intersections of Native American and international relations in the twentieth century, with an emphasis on sovereignty, self-determination, nationhood, and global Indigenous rights. A member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, O’Neal earned her PhD from Georgetown University where her dissertation examined the transformative shift, beginning in the early 1970s, of organized Native American and Indigenous groups within the United States and Canada to internationalize Indigenous activism. She recently received two grants for continued research on Native American women activists as she transforms her dissertation into a book.

Before joining IRES, O’Neal had already been offering innovative courses for IRES, History, and the Honors College for eight years. Her classes center the ethics and the process of research in Indigenous communities, teaching in a way that prioritizes Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous needs, and Indigenous methodologies. Her students conduct community-based research with Indigenous communities, sometimes traveling to Burns or Warm Springs to talk with Paiute elders, and the results of their projects are shared and given back to the community, respecting tribal protocols of control over their own knowledge. This approach emphasizes the importance of building respectful, collaborative, long-term relationships between tribal communities and academics by centering the needs and perspectives of tribal partners. While the academic world often rushes people, O’Neal prioritizes slow and steady research to allow time for strengthening bonds between researchers and communities they work with.

Over the past 15 years, O’Neal has been leading the development and implementation of best practices for Native American archives in non-tribal repositories in the United States. As with her classes, her focus has been on protocols that prioritize needs of Indigenous communities and on building collaborative relationships. In 2014, O’Neal received the Diversity Award from the Society of American Archivists for her activist work in this vein, and in 2020, her article, “‘The Right to Know’: Decolonizing Native American Archives,” was named the best article of the previous five years by the Journal of Western Archives, evidence of her important contributions to the field.

At University of Oregon, Professor O’Neal has been busy building Native studies infrastructure. She has served on the advisory committee for the Native American Studies program since its formation in 2013, and she has not only been a faculty co-director for the Native American and Indigenous Studies Academic Residential Community (NAIS-ARC), but she was one of three Indigenous women who developed the program in 2017. She has co-hosted conferences, and won multiple teaching awards for her First-Year Interest Group and Reacting to the Past courses with Kevin Hatfield. Her dynamic involvement in all phases of knowledge production underlines her love of helping students on their journeys of historical research and insight, whether it be of their own cultures or of cultures they have never previously encountered. Through her teaching and research, she continues to nurture strong relationships with tribal communities and student researchers, building bridges between the academy and Indigenous communities. Shifting her home to IRES fosters her work and has helped her dedicate more time to training the next generation of scholars while producing her own innovative research in the process.
As we move through fall of 2020, another big 20 milestone comes into view, in the form of Department Coordinator Donella-Elizabeth Alston Cleveland’s 20th year with the Department of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies. This position, however, was not her first step into the world of education. Her freshman year at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey, she was thrust into the teaching arena two weeks after starting her own college journey. She taught at Pleasantville High School outside of Atlantic City, in what was called an “Abbott district” —a type of school district in New Jersey created after a lawsuit to ensure equitable provision of public education to all children. There are currently 31 Abbott districts in the state of New Jersey, but at the time there were only two, in the area where she taught. As a result, any kid that was in enough trouble to be kicked out of one school automatically had to be accepted into the other. The student population was composed of students from lower to middle class, and the school was underfunded, which meant that it had no program for gifted students, no theater program, and no Advanced Placement program. On top of that, it had an inordinate rate of teenage pregnancy, with no in-house childcare to speak of. Due to the underfunded and shorthanded nature of the school, Cleveland even found herself writing curriculum within the first year of teaching, a challenging task she met with enthusiasm.

Cleveland recalls repeatedly encountering troubled kids who found themselves forced to grow up too fast. Too often their coping mechanism was to harden themselves to meet a hard world, in some cases developing hair-trigger tempers. While rewarding in some aspects, the work wore on her, so after two and a half years, she sought a change. Serendipitously, one of her closest high school friends was also looking for a fresh start, in need of new scenery after a rough breakup, and her heart was set on Oregon. With the Oregon map on the table, eyes closed and pointer finger wandering, she landed on the city of Eugene. And off they went.

They pulled into Eugene the Saturday of Oregon Country Fair. Before beginning her career at the university, Cleveland had a job at a scientific research and development company in the publications department, doing proofreading and archiving. Her wife, however, knew she was destined to be elsewhere, and repeatedly encouraged her to apply to a position at the university. Her wife’s voice was joined by the voice of a friend, Jane, who had taken some classes with IRES and had read about an opening in our department. Jane was feverishly persistent, placing applications for the position in Cleveland’s mailbox until she finally applied and got the job.

Cut to current day, and Cleveland has been with the department for 20 years as of the fall term, walking cohort after cohort of graduating students through the forms they need to fill out or through the steps they will take across the stage on commencement day. People may not be aware of much of the work she does, since she plays the role of the magician behind the curtain in IRES, the one who makes everything happen behind the scenes with love, compassion, intuition, and grit. Despite opportunities to move up in the university administration world, she chooses to stay in IRES because of her love for its mission and for the faculty. She sees it as her dream classroom—a perpetual flow of knowledge in all directions, learning that never ends.

Away from the office, she indulges her love for theatre by performing on stage in various Eugene venues. In this setting, she opts for plays that illustrate eras of unbalance and harsh, often racial- or gender-based inequities as another form of advocacy work. She has acted in shows such as of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Clybourne Park*, *Vita and Virginia* - and a play written by local playwright and actor, Hershell Norwood.
and performed at Tsunami Books, *Fell The Tallest Tree: Judgment of Paul Robeson*. She read in a staged reading of *Sliver of a Full Moon* by Mary Kathryn Nagle with the Native American theatre group at the university longhouse. Another play she performed in was based off of transcripts from Supreme Court proceedings regarding the legalization of same-sex marriage. Since cameras were not allowed to document the proceedings in the courtroom, theatre activists sought to dramatize it to bring it to life. “Art is going to do different things to different people in different times,” she says. “If we can touch people’s hearts, sooner or later, there is going to be that connection, sooner or later, even just the littlest change in what that person will do or won’t do, because of their interaction with art.”

With any obstacle or hardship, Cleveland brings a tenacious resolve to the table. “This country has been through genocide and slavery and civil war and depression, the war in Vietnam, all sorts of hell and highwater, and back and again,” she says, reflecting on the overt White supremacy infecting contemporary politics. “It just means that we’ve got work to do, and we’re going to take a moment…and roll up our sleeves and get after it.”
New IRES Departmental Assistant: Sydney Wensel

At some point during our elementary school years, we are almost all presented with the question, “What do you want to do when you grow up?” Sydney Wensel always knew her answer: to help people. In what capacity? Well, that answer would be ever-evolving. However, seven months in, and she feels as if she has found a career home within IRES.

After graduating from Sheldon High School in Eugene in three programs – the International High School program, the Spanish Immersion program, and the traditional curriculum that Sheldon offered, Wensel obtained a bachelor’s degree in creative writing at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, New Jersey. Upon completion of college on the East Coast, she returned to her hometown here in Eugene, where she worked in a medical office for three years before joining IRES.

Raised by two doctors (one a psychiatrist and the other a neuroradiologist), she learned the joys of pursuing additional knowledge, thinking critically for herself, and being of service to others at a very young age. Because of her heritage with a German-Lebanese father and an African-American mother, she has always embraced, celebrated, and championed diversity, so she is particularly excited to work in IRES. She has long believed that cultural diversity builds strength, so she sought a career where she knew her work would support and enhance equity, and a job environment where diversity flourishes. She is a proud advocate for equity across the board, including along the lines of gender/gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or lack thereof, and disability, among others.

Because her first day on the job in March and every day of her position since then has been carried out remotely, she eagerly awaits the day when she can meet IRES students and colleagues in person. She strives to always approach life with an open heart, open mind, and open ears, and believes that learning is never done, so she can’t wait to surround herself with brilliant minds and stimulating conversations that circulate through IRES spaces on campus.
Maryn Joelle Ahler  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Ixchel Linda Barragan  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Jolene G. Bettles  
Native American Studies minor, BS

Danielle M. Bonilla  
Ethnic Studies major, BA  
Department Honors

Chloe Margaret Borchard  
Ethnic Studies major, BA  
Department Honors & Cum Laude

Jordan O’Neal Caines  
Ethnic Studies major, BS

Melissa Casas-Carreno  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Araceli Coronado-Castillo  
Ethnic Studies major, BA  
Department Honors

Edith R. Cruz  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Jessica Delaney Douglas  
Native American Studies minor, BA

Kobe C. Dumas  
Ethnic Studies minor, BS

Amanda M. Ervin  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Luz Melissa Fandiño  
Ethnic Studies major, BA  
Department Honors

Melissa Galvan  
Ethnic Studies major, BS  
Department Honors

Danielle N. Goldman  
Ethnic Studies minor, BS

Janice Valera Gonzalez  
Ethnic Studies major, BA  
Department Honors

Mayra Alejandra Gutierrez  
Ethnic Studies major, BA

Melanie Ruth Henshaw  
Native American Studies minor, BA

Daniel Alejandro Hernandez  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Zachary Hjort  
Ethnic Studies major, BA

Gwendolyn Hodson  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Vaughan M. Hooper  
Ethnic Studies minor, BS

Callista Aisha Hutson  
Ethnic Studies major, BA  
Department Honors, Magna Cum Laude & Phi Beta Kappa

Paulina Sofia Jafarzadeh  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Diana Maria Jimenez Contreras  
Ethnic Studies major, BS

Osieauna Lasondra Johnston  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Noah Mekuria Kulala  
Ethnic Studies minor, BS

Frances Mason Lowe  
Ethnic Studies major, BA

Ana C. Mendoza Perez  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Brooke Nicole Miller  
Ethnic Studies major, BA  
Department Honors

Makenna Richelle Moore  
Ethnic Studies minor, BS

Jesus Ernesto Narvaez Santiago  
Ethnic Studies major, BA  
Department Honors

Isabel Bolouri Nattagh  
Ethnic Studies minor, BS

Guadalupe Oropeza-Gomez  
Ethnic Studies major, BA  
Department Honors

Lorenzo Antonio Ortiz Cruz  
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Sabrina Park  
Ethnic Studies minor, BS
Aaron Jacob Peterson
Native American Studies & Ethnic Studies minor, BS

Payton Rae Portlock
Ethnic Studies minor, BS

Joaquin Ramos
Ethnic Studies major, BA

TishaSweety Rosana Rupelly John
Ethnic Studies major, BS
Department Honors

Mireya Anel Santos Gonzaga
Ethnic Studies major, BA

Molly Antonia Schuster
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Jordon Corleone Scott
Ethnic Studies major, BA

Karlie Iris Scott
Native American Studies minor, BA

Kyra Marie Solis
Ethnic Studies major, BA
Department Honors

Sara Akhter Tanveer
Ethnic Studies major, BS

Yomaira Janet Tarula-Aranda
Ethnic Studies major, BS
Department Honors

Michelle Ureno
Ethnic Studies major, BA

Katrina Sylvia Weinstein
Ethnic Studies minor, BS

Kimberly Robyn Wheeler
Ethnic Studies major, BS

Makaal Kimari Renee Williams
Ethnic Studies major, BS
Department Honors

Bareerah Zafar
Ethnic Studies minor, BA

Alyssa Lee Zemp
Ethnic Studies minor, BS
Representative John Lewis and the Right to Vote

In the wake of a November that saw the election of our first Black/Asian/woman Vice President of the United States and the monumental enfranchisement efforts of Black women leaders in Georgia and elsewhere, it seems appropriate to reflect on the legacy of Congressman John Lewis whose fierce activism in Selma and Montgomery and whose long service in Congress helped carry us to this point. In his final days, the late Congressman reflected on the urgent activism he saw unfolding before him in the summer of 2020:

"While my time here has now come to an end, I want you to know that in the last days and hours of my life you inspired me. You filled me with hope about the next chapter of the great American story when you used your power to make a difference in our society... That is why I had to visit Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington... I just had to see and feel it for myself that, after many years of silent witness, the truth is still marching on.

Emmett Till was my George Floyd. He was my Rayshard Brooks, Sandra Bland, and Breonna Taylor. He was 14 when he was killed, and I was only 15 years old at the time. I will never ever forget the moment when it became so clear that he could easily have been me... When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something... Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble...

You must also study and learn the lessons of history because humanity has been involved in this soul-wrenching, existential struggle for a very long time... Though I may not be here with you, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe. In my life, I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way. Now it is your turn to let freedom ring... So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide."


IN MEMORIAM, CONGRESSMAN JOHN ROBERT LEWIS

February 21, 1940 - July 17, 2020
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