DERECHOS EN CRISIS: Refugees, Migrant Detention, and Authoritarian Neoliberalism

WEDNESDAY–FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 24–26, 2016
BENSON LATIN AMERICAN COLLECTION, SRH 1.208

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TERESA LOZANO LONG INSTITUTE OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
NETTIE LEE BENSON LATIN AMERICAN COLLECTION
MEXICAN AMERICAN AND LATINA/O STUDIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
In light of renewed nativist cries for a crackdown against refugees and the deteriorating public security situation in Mexico and Central America, this conference will convene scholars from diverse disciplines with migrant and refugee advocates and organizations from across the Americas to debate and discuss the politics of asylum, migrant detention, and the structural conditions displacing forced migrants from the Mesoamerican region.

**Faculty Organizers:** Alfonso Gonzales, LLILAS, Dept. of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies and Rebecca M. Torres, Dept. of Geography and the Environment

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DERECHOS EN CRISIS: Refugees, Migrant Detention, and Authoritarian Neoliberalism

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

5:00 PM OPENING REMARKS

Charles R. Hale, Director, LLILAS Benson, UT Austin
Luis H. Zayas, Dean, School of Social Work, UT Austin
Alfonso Gonzales, LLILAS and Dept. of Mexican American and Latino/a Studies, UT Austin
Rebecca M. Torres, Dept. of Geography and the Environment, UT Austin

5:15–6:45 PM PLENARY PANEL

NEOLIBERALISM, FORCED MIGRATION, and MESOAMERICAN REFUGEES

MODERATOR: Néstor Rodríguez, UT Austin

Dawn Paley, Author, Drug War Capitalism
“Drug War Capitalism in Central America: Investment Promotion and Security Funding as Structural Causes of Migration”

Julieta Castellanos, National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH)
“Migration Processes, Exclusion, and Insecurity”

Cecilia Menjívar, University of Kansas
“Is There a Role for Academics in the Support of Central American Refugees?”

Agustín Estrada Negrete, International Center “All of Them”
“Los refugiados políticos en el contexto neoliberal: experiencia personal, Caso EE.UU”

7:00 PM PUBLIC RECEPTION

Performance by Mauricio Callejas
Thursday, February 25

9:00–10:30 AM  PANEL I

MIGRANT DETENTION AND THE US ASYLUM REGIME

MODERATOR: Denise Gilman, UT School of Law

Barbara Hines, Emerson Collective
“Detention and the Obstacles Facing US Asylum Seekers”

Gilberto Rosas, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
“Capital Addictions and New Uncertainties at the US-Mexico Border”

David Hernández, Mount Holyoke College
“Family Ties: Genealogical Roots of Family Detention”

Carlos Spector, Mexicanos en Exilio
“Crime Authorized: The Enemy Behind Violence in Mexico”

10:30–10:45 AM  COFFEE BREAK

10:45 AM–12:15 PM  PANEL II

VIOLENCE, FORCED MIGRATION, AND MEXICAN REFUGEES

MODERATOR: Laura Gutiérrez, UT Austin

Raúl Delgado Wise, Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas

Oscar Misael Hernández, COLEF Matamoros
“State, Migrant Children, and an Anthropologist at the Border”

Héctor Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, UT Austin
“La Verdad del Sexilio: Credibility in Some Cases of Sexual Diversity Asylum”

May-ek Querales, CIESAS México
“Chihuahua, México, entre 2008 y 2014: un ejemplo de la importancia de lo local en la interpretación de la categorías del asilo político”

12:15–2:15 PM  LUNCH BREAK
2:15–4:15 PM  
**PANEL III**

**VIOLENCE, FORCED MIGRATION, AND CENTRAL AMERICAN REFUGEES**

**MODERATOR:** Luis González, UT Austin

**Leisy Abrego,** UCLA  
“Central American Women and Girls: A Gendered View of Forced Migration”

**Ursula Roldán Andrade,** Universidad Rafael Landívar de Guatemala  
“Forced Migration: Challenges for Shelter and Hospitality”

**Carmen Fernández Casanueva,** CIESAS  
“Between Integration, Borders, and Belonging: Honduran Migrants in Cities and Huixtla Tapachula, Chiapas”

**Ruth Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada,** UT Austin  
“Grassroots Peacemaking of Gangs: The Contradictory Fight for Political and Human Rights among Youth Gangs in El Salvador”

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**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

9:00–10:45 AM  
**PANEL IV**

**ADVOCACY AND STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE IN TEXAS**

**MODERATOR:** Shannon Speed, UCLA

**José Luis Hernández Cruz,** Asociación de Migrantes Retornados con Discapacidad (AMIREDIS)  
“From Honduras to the United States: The True Story of the Immigrant Journey”

**Cristina Parker,** Grassroots Leadership  
“Reflections from the Campaign to End Family Detention”

**Virginia Raymond,** Attorney and Immigrant/Refugee Rights Activist  
“The Making of Undocumented Citizens: Nation-States Rage as Binaries Fade”

**Amanda Posson,** Refugee Services of Texas  

**Alfonso Gonzales,** UT Austin  
“Notes on the Role of Intellectuals in the Politics of Migration Control and Social Movements”
10:45–11:00 AM  COFFEE BREAK

11:00 AM–12:30 PM  PANEL V

BUILDING A TRANSNATIONAL MESOAmerICAN REFUGEE MOVEMENT

MODERATOR: Esther Portillo Gonzales, Human Rights Alliance for Refugee Women and Children

Suyapa Portillo Villeda, Pitzer College
“Hurricanes, Coups, and Neoliberalism: Honduran Migrants in an Era of Insecurity”

Alex Sanchez, Homies Unidos
“Unaccompanied Minors: Reliving the ’80s Experience”

Sulma Franco, Texans United for Families
“Reflexiones de procesos legales de inmigración y la Red de Santuario como estrategia”

Miriam Miranda, Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña

12:30 PM  CLOSING REMARKS

7:00 PM  FUNDRAISER DANCE

Please join us for a dance and fundraiser benefiting Grassroots Leadership / Human Rights Alliance for Refugee Women and Children.

MI MADRE’S RESTAURANT, 2201 MANOR ROAD, AUSTIN, TX 78722
Leisy J. Abrego is an associate professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies at UCLA. Trained as a sociologist, she studies families, Central American migration, and Latino immigrants’ lived experiences of US immigration laws. She is the author of *Sacrificing Families: Navigating Laws, Labor, and Love Across Borders* (Stanford University Press). Abrego provides pro-bono expert declarations in asylum cases of Salvadoran mothers and children.

Julieta Castellanos Ruiz is rector of the National Autonomous University of Honduras; director of the Institute for Democracy, Peace and Security; and the founder of Violence Observatory. She holds a master’s in economics and development planning from the National Autonomous University of Honduras. She is co-author of numerous books on violence, politics, and corruption in Honduras. In 2009, she was appointed Commissioner for the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation to assess the political crisis after the Honduran coup d'état. She received the International Women of Courage Award in 2013.

Raúl Delgado Wise, PhD, is coordinator of the UNESCO Chair on Migration, Development and Human Rights; president and founder of the International Network on Migration and Development; and co-director of the Critical Development Studies Network. A prolific author and lecturer, he was keynote speaker for the opening of the First Global Forum on Migration and Development (Brussels, July 2007). A recipient of the Maestro Jesús Silva Herzog Prize for economic research in 1993, Delgado Wise is a member of the Mexican Academy of Sciences, the Mexican Academy of Political Economy, and the National System of Researchers (level III).

Héctor Domínguez-Ruvalcaba received his PhD in Hispanic Literature from the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is an associate professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UT Austin, where he teaches Queer Latin American Literature and Culture, Latin American Modernism, and film. His areas of interest are queer Latin American studies, gender violence on the US–Mexico border, and criminal organizations in Mexico.

Agustín Humberto Estrada Negrete is former director and teacher at the Centro de Atención Múltiple (CAM) 33 y 34 de Chiconautla, a school for children with special needs. In 2009, he was removed from his position and jailed by the Mexican government for being homosexual. He appealed to the United Nations, requesting an inquiry by the Mexican national government into the case. In spring of 2010, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights requested that the Mexican national government guarantee the safety and physical well-being of Estrada Negrete. Mexico ignored this request.
Carmen Fernández Casanueva specializes in the study of immigration from Central America to the southern border of Mexico. She holds a doctorate from the University of Essex in 2006. Since 2009, has studied a community of Honduran migrants living in Soconusco, Chiapas, and has published accounts on this region. She has also collaborated on projects related to migration and mobility at the southern border of Mexico.

Sulma Franco is an activist with Texans United for Families (TUFF), an all-volunteer-driven project of Grassroots Leadership that came together during the fight to end family detention at the T. Don Hutto Detention Center in Taylor, Texas.

Denise Gilman teaches and directs the Immigration Clinic at The University of Texas School of Law. She has a law degree from Columbia University School of Law and an LLM from Georgetown University Law Center. Gilman has written and practiced extensively in the international human rights and immigrants’ rights fields. She was a member of the American Bar Association’s Commission on Immigration for the 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 terms.

Alfonso Gonzales (co-organizer) is an assistant professor at the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS) and the Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies at UT Austin. Gonzales’s scholarly interests are in Latino and Latin American politics, migration control, and migrant social movements in the United States, Mexico, and Central America. He is particularly interested in what the politics of migration control—which, broadly conceived, includes policing, asylum, detention, and deportation—means for democracy, human rights, and justice. In pursuing this research, Professor Gonzales has relied on a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches, including political theory, global political economy, critical ethnography, discourse analysis, and critical race theory.

Luis R. González was born in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, and raised in Dallas, Texas. A US Army veteran, he served in Operation Iraqi Freedom for three tours. González earned a BA from UT Austin, majoring in ethnic studies (Center for Mexican American Studies) and history. He is currently a second-year master’s student in the Department of Mexican and Latina/o Studies, where his research focuses on unaccompanied youth migration from Guatemala, immigration policy, and international migration, with faculty adviser Néstor P. Rodríguez.

Laura Gutiérrez is associate professor of Performance as Public Practice in the Department of Art and Art History at The University of Texas at Austin. She holds affiliate appointments in the Center for Mexican American Studies and the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies. Gutiérrez is the author of Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y Cabareteras on the Transnational Stage (UT Press, 2010), which won the Ninth Annual MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies.
Charles R. Hale is professor of anthropology at The University of Texas at Austin and, since 2009, director of the university’s Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS). As of 2011, he directs LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections, a partnership between LLILAS and the world-renowned Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection.

David Hernández is assistant professor of Latina/o studies at Mount Holyoke College. His research focuses on immigration enforcement, in particular, the US detention regime. He is completing a book manuscript on this institution titled “Undue Process: Immigrant Detention and Lesser Citizenship,” and is also the co-editor of Critical Ethnic Studies: A Reader (Duke University Press, 2016). His work has appeared in journals such as Border-Lines, Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy, Journal of Race and Policy, Latina/o Studies, and NACLA: Report on the Americas.

Oscar Hernández is a member of the National System of Researchers in Mexico and an associate researcher in the Department of Social Studies at the College of the Northern Border in Matamoros. He holds a degree in sociology from the Autonomous University of Tamaulipas and master’s and doctorate degrees in social anthropology from Michoacán College.

José Luis Hernández Cruz is director and founder of Asociación de Migrantes Retornados con Discapacidad (Association of Returned Migrants with Disabilities, AMIREDIS). A native of Honduras, Hernández fell from a train in Mexico during his journey to the United States in 2006, losing a leg, an arm, and three fingers. Through AMIREDIS, he is an advocate for other migrants, mostly young, who were injured and became disabled as a result of trying to escape the violence in Honduras. He is active as a motivational speaker and currently resides in Maryland.

Barbara Hines is an Emerson Collective senior fellow and serves on the Board of the National Immigration Project. She is former clinical professor and co-director of the Immigration Clinic at The University of Texas School of Law. In 1996 and 2004, Hines was a Fulbright scholar in Argentina focusing on immigration issues. She has received numerous awards for her excellence in litigation and teaching, as well as the 2002 Texas Law Fellowships Public Interest Award, the 2010 National Lawyers Guild Carol King Award, and the 2015 National Women’s Political Caucus Women of Courage Award.

Cecilia Menjívar is a Foundation Distinguished Professor in sociology at the University of Kansas. Her research examines the workings of state power in two areas of everyday life: immigration from Central America to the United States and violence in Central America. She is the author of Fragmented Ties: Salvadoran Immigrant Networks in America (University of California Press, 2000) and Enduring Violence: Ladina Women’s Everyday Lives in Guatemala (University of California Press, 2011), and co-author of Immigrant Families, with Leisy Abrego and Leah Smalzbauer (Polity, 2016).
Miriam Miranda is the founder of Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña (Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras, OFRANEH), which was created in 1979 to protect the economic, social, and cultural rights of 46 Garífuna communities along the Atlantic Coast of Honduras. Winner of the 2015 Food Sovereignty Prize, OFRANEH focuses on environmental threats to Garífuna communities, defense of land rights, and leadership development among women and youth.

Dawn Paley is a journalist from Vancouver, BC (Coast Salish territories). She is currently a doctoral student at the Autonomous University of Puebla in Mexico. Her first book, Drug War Capitalism, was published in November 2014.

Cristina Parker is projects coordinator for Grassroots Leadership. An El Paso native, she holds degrees in journalism and political science from the University of Missouri. Prior to assuming her current position, she worked with the Border Network for Human Rights and Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance.

Esther Portillo Gonzales is a founder of the Human Rights Alliance for Child Refugees and Families, an organization that supports Central American and Mexican refugees who are seeking asylum in the US. For over a decade, she has organized locally and nationally around issues of migrant rights and environmental and worker justice. She has written articles on Central American politics for numerous publications. As a research fellow at Race Forward, she helped prepare the groundbreaking report “Shattered Families: The Perilous Intersection of Immigration Enforcement and Child Welfare.”

Suyapa G. Portillo Villeda is assistant professor of Chicana/o Latina/o Transnational Studies at Pitzer College. Her interests include Central American history, Central American migration to the United States, gender and labor in the Latin America, US Latino/a LGBTQ populations and immigration, and healthcare in the Americas. Her current project explores the history of the 1954 strike in the North Coast of Honduras and the formation of a national labor movement. A former child migrant, she works with community groups to raise awareness about immigration issues. She holds a BA from Pitzer College, Claremont, CA and both a master’s and a PhD from Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

Amanda Posson is Vice President of Programs at Refugee Services of Texas (RST), the largest refugee resettlement provider in the state of Texas, assisting over 3,000 refugees, asylees, Cuban parolees, survivors of trafficking, and unaccompanied children annually. Posson provides direct oversight to RST’s five service offices, located in Amarillo, Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston. She holds a master’s degree from the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of American Studies (LLILAS) at UT Austin, where she focused on migrant women’s participation in hometown associations and the Mexican federal government’s 3x1 remittance program.

May-ek Querales holds a master’s in social anthropology from Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS). Her research
looks at subjectivity and culture, migration and violence. She has worked as a volunteer for the NGO Mexicanos en Exilio, supporting Mexican citizens in the US with asylum claims. Currently, she is secretary-general of Foro Latinoamericano de Antropologia del Derecho–Equipo México.

Virginia Marie Raymond, JD, PhD, is an immigration lawyer, oral historian, and independent scholar. Her recent law practice focuses on the presentation of asylum applicants from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Brazil, Burundi, and Cameroon. She has spent a lot of time in the last couple of years in the immigration prisons run by the for-profit corporations GEO and CCA in Karnes, Taylor (Hutto), Laredo, Pearsall, Robstown, and Conroe.

Néstor Rodríguez’s collaborative research on migration has included the topics of Central American migration to the United States, violence and trauma among Central American unaccompanied migrant children, and family and community effects in Texas and El Salvador of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, among many others. His publications include Guatemala–US Migration: Transforming Regions, co-authored with Susanne Jonas (UT Press, 2014) and the forthcoming volumes Migration in an Era of Restriction and Recession, co-edited with David Leal (Springer, 2016), and Return Migration: Migrant Experiences in Mexico and Central America, co-edited with Byran Roberts and Cecilia Menjívar (Springer).

Ursula Roldán Andrade is director and researcher at the Institute for Research and Social Projection of Global and Territorial Dynamics at the Rafael Landívar University in Guatemala. She has a doctorate in geography from the University of Paris. She has twenty years’ experience in the development of projects, programs, analysis, public policy proposals, research reports, articles, and publications linked to the agrarian problem, rural development, political participation, and, in the past two years, migration.

Gilberto Rosas is associate professor of Latino/Latina Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. He works on questions of criminality, race and its intersections, sovereignty, biopolitics, and ethnographic research techniques in the thickening Mexico–United States borderlands. His publications include the 2012 book Barrio Libre: Criminalizing States and Delinquent Refusals of the New Frontier (Duke University Press).

Alex Sánchez is executive director of the Los Angeles branch of Homies Unidos, an organization in the Pico Union and Koreatown area of Los Angeles with a sister organization in San Salvador. In 1998, he began implementing programs geared toward youth in gangs. In 2000, he was targeted by the Rampart police and became part of the infamous Rampart scandal. In 2002, he won political asylum. Sanchez's dedication to issues of transnational youth violence and criminalized immigrants has made him a unique expert on the issue. He has testified in court
as a gang expert for the defense on countless occasions, as well as in the California legislature and before the United Nations.

Carlos Spector is an immigration attorney from El Paso, Texas. In 1991, he won the first political asylum claim for a Mexican citizen. Along with his wife, Sandra Spector, he founded the organization Mexicanos en Exilio, offering legal defense to Mexicans seeking political asylum in the United States. The organization continues to demand justice from the Mexican government.

Shannon Speed is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation. She holds a PhD in anthropology and Native American studies from the University of California, Davis. She is currently associate professor of anthropology and director of Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) at UCLA. She has published five books and edited volumes as well as numerous articles. Her current book in progress is titled “States of Violence: Indigenous Women Migrants and Human Rights in the Era of Neoliberalism.”

Rebecca M. Torres (co-organizer) is associate professor in the Department of Geography and the Environment at UT Austin. Her experiences as both a development practitioner and an academic have provided her with the opportunity to work with diverse topics related to rural/community development and poverty reduction in Latin America and the US South. Specifically, she is interested in migration and rural restructuring; agricultural change; and the intersection between tourism, poverty, and development.

Ruth Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology, The University of Texas at Austin. She holds a master's degree from UT Austin's Activist Anthropology Program. Her work examines grassroots peacemaking, effects of neoliberalism, gender relations, and forms of resistance in El Salvador. She is author of Grassroots Peacemaking: The Paradox of Reconciliation in El Salvador (Social Justice, 2015), and is currently working on her doctoral dissertation, “Paradoxes of Grassroots Peacemaking: Violence, Masculinity, and Intergenerational Dialogues in Postwar El Salvador.”

Luis H. Zayas is dean of the School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin. In a social work career spanning 35 years, he has cross-walked clinical practice, supervision, administration, teaching, and research. He is author, most recently, of Forgotten Citizens: Deportation, Children, and the Making of American Exiles and Orphans (Oxford, 2015), which deals with the plight of US citizen-children whose parents have been deported. As a practitioner, Zayas is involved in evaluating citizen-children and testifying in immigration courts on behalf of these children and their families. This practice has led to his public advocacy for citizen-children.