

# After Comparatism



March 31st -  
April 1st,  
2023

gracils



**The University of Texas at Austin**

***After Comparatism***

An Interdisciplinary Conference at the University of  
Texas at Austin Organized by the Graduate Association of  
Comparative Literature Students (GRACLS)

And the Program in Comparative Literature.

March 31st-April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023

Conference programming will take place in the Student  
Activity Center (WCP), Friday and Saturday

The keynote conversation will take place at the  
Glickman Conference Center In Patton hall (RLP)  
on Saturday early evening, with a reception to  
follow.



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For more information: <https://sites.utexas.edu/graclsconference/>

## Schedule

### Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>

8:45am – 9:45am	Registration and Breakfast
9:45am – 11:15am	Panels 1, 2
11:15am – 12:15pm	Break for lunch
12:15pm – 1:45pm	Panels 3, 4
2:00pm – 3:30pm	Panel 5
3:45pm-5:00pm	Panel 6

### Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>

10:00am – 10:30am	Registration and Breakfast
10:30am – 12:00pm	Panels 7,8
12:00pm – 12:45pm	Break for lunch
12:45pm – 2:15pm	Panel 9
2:30pm – 4:00pm	Panel 10, 11
4:00pm – 5:15pm	Keynote Address: “Maroon Geographies of Indigenous Blackness: Garifuna New Yorkers in/of Diaspora” by Dr. López Oro
5:15pm – 6:30pm	Reception: DJ Mortalcoil

## Acknowledgements

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and the African and African Diaspora Studies Department

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**The College of Liberal Arts**

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Special thanks to:

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Director of the Program in Comparative Literature

**Dr. César Salgado**

Graduate Advisor, Program in Comparative Literature

**Sherridan Schwartz**

Graduate Coordinator, Program in Comparative Literature

**Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza**

Conference Faculty Advisor

**Ana Duclaud**

GRACLS President

**Silvana Scott, Keith Wagner, Katie Field, Ali Yanik**

Conference Organizers

**Shukri Bana and Michael Cordova**

Conference Organizing Volunteers

**Amber Taylor**

GRACLS Secretary and Conference Logo Artist

And to our conference volunteers for their generous support throughout the conference.

Thank you all!

## Director's Note

“After Comparatism,” the topic of this year’s Comparative Literature conference, invites us to explore the legacy of humanism and the idea of the human within our various fields of study. Humanism is not one thing but many; it is at once utopian, aspirational, anodyne, platitudinous, colonial, racialized, gendered, speciesist and more. The elusive role of the human as object, investigative agent and supreme value of humanism, and its implicit or explicit opposition to the non-human, the inhuman, the irrational, the super-human, the animal, and the cyborg or machine makes the human hard to place. That said, we are never *not* making or inferring such placements and comparisons. The human is as fundamental and high-stakes a category as it is a slippery one that requires our continual scrutiny, because we use it all the time for all kinds of purposes.

The work of Jamaican theorist and novelist Sylvia Wynter serves as the inspiration and springboard for our collective reflections this weekend. For Wynter, the human – and more specifically Man as representative of the human – are loaded terms that merit close historical and cultural analysis. In her 2003 essay “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom,” Wynter invokes Michel Foucault’s “invention of Man” as a set of secularizing efforts during the European Renaissance and Enlightenment to redefine the human as a political subject distinct from its earlier “matrix Christian identity.” It was during the Renaissance that the *studia humanitatis*, or the humanities, emerged as a field of knowledge within universities, where it has remained ever since. Yet the humanities and the human sciences incorporated almost from their inception not only the glorification of the “human” and of “Man,” but also ethnic and racial divisions and hierarchies. These in turn were soon mobilized as justification for the rise of Europe as a world power, and for the enslavement, colonizing or subjugation of other regions and peoples around the world. As Wynter argues, “‘Race’ was therefore to be, in effect, the nonsupernatural but no less extrahuman ground (in the reoccupied place of the traditional ancestors/gods, God, ground) of the answer that the secularizing West would now give to the Heideggerian question as to the who, and the what we are.”

Today, twenty years after Wynter published her influential essay, we are still wrestling with versions of same problems that she identified therein. These include ongoing struggles regarding race and ethnicity, social class, and gender and sexuality; intensifying climate change; “the sharply unequal distribution of the earth resources,” and the overconsumption of the industrialized North, together with the continued impoverishment of the global South. These problems, Wynter held, “are all differing facets of the central ethnoclass Man vs. Human struggle” – that is to say, the overrepresentation of the Western bourgeois “conception of the human, Man, . . . as if it were the human itself.” In the face of all these struggles and pressures, something has to give. What that something is we are about to consider. Understanding our keywords, as the cultural materialist critic Raymond Williams would say, is a crucial first step.

2023 marks the 18<sup>th</sup> annual GRACLS conference, now a long-standing tradition within the Program in Comparative Literature. A tremendous amount of planning went into making this conference happen this year, and I would like to thank the student organizers of this event – Silvana Scott, Katie Field, Keith Wagner and Ali Yanik—as well as GRACLS officers Ana Duclaud and Amber Taylor, and Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, Dr. César Salgado, Sherridan Schwartz, Donetta Dean Gibbs, and Cecilia Smith Morris for making this event happen. I would also like to thank the many departments and programs that contributed funding for this very special event.

– Dr. Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski

## Graduate Advisor's Note

Sylvia Wynter's work demands that we ask ourselves whether and how we can venture to speak of the post-human when the enormous categorical distortions, exponential ethno-demographic and socioeconomic inequalities, and structures of global domination and exploitation that have resulted from the exclusionary, supremacist ways that the West has defined the human—what Wynter has brilliantly analyzed as “Man1” and Man2”—are still egregiously operating in today's scenarios of rapidly globalized catastrophe. Both complementing and superseding game-changing critico-epistemic arguments such as Aníbal Quijano's “coloniality of power” and Michel Foucault's “invention of man,” Wynter proposes that the definitions of “Man” (or “descriptive statements,” as she prefers to call them) imposed by the West on Africa, Asia, and the Americas have, since antiquity, forced subalterns to assume as a neutralizing ontology what is in fact a powerful and sinister sociogeny of hierarchical and racialized domination. With visionary prescience, Wynter has pondered this millenary process under the overarching critical paradigm of “the coloniality of being.”

As someone who in many ways shares, with Wynter, a Caribbean origin and commitment that remains (I hope) epistemologically, existentially, and ethically productive, I congratulate the organizers of the 2023 UT Austin GRACLS conference for using Wynter's work as a point of departure. I hope that, in our exchanges and presentations, we can rethink together the nature, history, function, and purpose of “humanistic studies” today in a way that can make what we practice as comparatists of transcontinental, meta-archipelagic, and trans-epochal literatures and cultures more radically inclusive, just, and fully decolonial.

— Dr. César A. Salgado

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## Conference Faculty Advisor's Note

I write exactly three years to the day after the pandemic closed UT Austin in March 2020. I would like to reflect on living in these “after times.” Early on especially, many imagined a “return to normal,” uneasy and stung by the ache for a condition of being that seemed to have been present only a moment before. Or perhaps they were imagining “before times” which had never quite existed. In those first isolated months, we interrogated both our public and private selves and considered the world we had made and just shut down. Those reflections were painful and important. Despite liberal optimism that we had changed the world for the good, reckonings with systemic racism and with the violence we have inflicted on our planet and fellow humans haunted the start of this period of global introspection, even as the horrors of the invasion of Ukraine and the earthquakes and aftermaths in Turkey and Syria occupy our thoughts and demand our care today. In a few words, I cannot list all the other spaces and moments of pain that have affected even the members of our nearest communities. There is no hierarchy of suffering, and I hope each of you will complete my insufficient list here in your minds.

For the next two days, however, we come together to remind ourselves of the work of interrogating the human both that has been done and that remains to be done. We will imagine and share responses to Sylvia Wynter's challenge to undertake anticolonial work in all disciplines and archives. Comparative Literature has been the companion of empire. On occasion our field has offered an alternative to hegemonic oppression, providing a refuge for fugitive humans and their expressivity. Far too often, however, it has been complicit in intersectionally exclusive and oppressive systems of control. As feline as humans can be, averse to change and too easily lulled into habit, the word “after” in our title is intended to trouble our identities and to make of that discomfort a point of departure. Founded as a field by refugees from global imperial conflict, the disciplinary location of this conversation (but not its limit) derives its view of the human from race, location, and time like any other praxis. Taking its cue from a Jamaican writer and cultural theorist and keynoted by a distinguished alum of UT Austin who focuses on intersectional transnationalism, our meeting this spring looks back critically and looks forward intrepidly.

With presentations that gaze afar as well as projects that look deeply into our nearest but often overlooked communities, our participants will join us both virtually and in person to unearth diverse conceptions of the human. They will invite our disciplines to reorient their inquiries in ways that interrupt rather than enabling the legacies of empires. Wynter suggests that “The struggle of the millennium will be one between the ongoing imperative of securing the well-being of our present ethnoclass (i.e., the Western bourgeois) conception of the human, Man, which overrepresents itself as it if were the human itself, and the securing of the well-being and therefore the full cognitive and behavioral autonomy of the human species itself/ourselves.” Her 2003 essay goes on to demand that we undertake the task of “altering our systems of meanings and their privileged texts.” As I glance through the titles in this program, I see Wynter's “second self-assertion of the human taking place,” enabled by the sponsorship of too many groups and individuals to name, both from within UT Austin and beyond. When Silvana Scott first approached me and offered to lead this undertaking a year ago and to draw together so many colleagues and collaborators, I realized I had been given the gift of the “after.” In this moment I am so grateful for this necessary space to turn together away from the “before” and embrace the “after.”

– Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza (she/they)

## Accessibility

\*The WCP and RLP buildings are fully accessible by ADA standards. All restrooms are accessible.

\*Gender-inclusive restrooms in the WCP can be found in the following locations:

2<sup>nd</sup> floor, across from the Ballroom

2<sup>nd</sup> floor, across from the Gender & Sexuality Center

1<sup>st</sup> floor, food court area

\*A gender-inclusive restroom in RLP can be found on the fourth floor, Room 4.128.

\*Scent-free soap is provided at reception if you would like to take it to the restroom, use it, and return it.

\*A designated space for rehearsing your paper, resting, and reflecting can be found in Room 3.106 of the WCP on Saturday

\*We have built in 15 minutes of transition between panels as well as a lunch break on both days.

\*There will be breakfast tacos from Central Market, fresh fruit, coffee, tea, and water available at registration in Room (3.114) beginning at 8:45am (Friday) and 10:00am (Saturday) and while supplies last throughout the day.

\*Food options available on the first floor of the WCP.

\*During panels and the keynote conversations, feel free to stand up, move to the back of the room, eat, drink, and do whatever you need to do to be comfortable in the space.

\*During panels and the keynote conversation, questions can be written on paper and submitted to the moderator or posed orally.

## Program

### FRIDAY, MARCH 31<sup>st</sup>

**8:45am** Registration opens. Breakfast tacos, fresh fruit, coffee, tea, and water will be available while supplies last. (3.114)

Lauren Lluveras' "A Gulf Stream Ecclesiology: The Afro-Atlantic Metaphysical" curation at the Blanton Museum, will be available all day in the Print Room on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor. Participants may choose to experience the curation individually any time throughout the day (museum hours are 10am-5pm) or as a group during the designated time slot for Panel 6. We highly encourage everybody to go either individually or as a group!

#### 9:45am-11:15am

**Panel 1. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom" Post Coloniality, Modernity and Politics (3.106)**

*Panel moderator: Dr. Naomi Lindstrom*

1. Fatemeh Soleimani (she/her), *UT Austin*  
"Modernization for a Colonized Woman"
2. Thais Rutledge (she/her), *UT Austin*  
"Marginalization and the Modern Narrative in Woolf, Lispector, and Carolina Maria de Jesus"
3. \*Nishant Upadhyay (he/him), *UT Austin*  
"A Human Yet To Be: A Critical Comparison of Marxist 'sarvahārā' and Ambedkarite 'dalit' Epistemologies of Their Subjects"

\*Virtual presenter

**Panel 2. "The Rule is Love" Disruptions, Intimacies and Desire (3.114)**

*Panel moderator: Dr. Elizabeth Richmond- Garza (she/they)*

1. Weston Richey (they/them), *UT Austin*  
"The Loving Dead"
2. Emma Wilson (she/hers), *UT Austin*  
"Becoming and Being: Queer Temporality in Nina Bouraoui's All Men Want to Know"
3. \*Dr. Rosy Mack (she/her), *University of Birmingham*  
"Somewhat Automated Luxurious Gay Space Communism"

\*Virtual presenter

**11:15am – 12:15pm Break for lunch**

**12:15pm – 1:45pm**

**Panel 3. “After Proficiency” Interrupting Conventions in the World Languages Classroom (3.114)**

*Roundtable moderator: Dr. Thomas Garza (he/him)*

1. Will Wasta Werner (he/him), *UT Austin*
2. Teresa Blumenthal. *UT Austin*
3. Dylan Gilbert, *UT Austin*
4. Garrett Shuffield (he/him), *UT Austin*
5. \*Mikey Calo (she/her), *UT Austin*  
“The Limitations and Possibilities of Institutional DEI Pedagogy: Humanities Syllabi and their Discontents”

\*Virtual presenter

**Panel 4. “Genre-Specific Narratives of Who “We” Are” New Media, Retelling the Past and the Subaltern (3.106)**

*Panel moderator: Dr. Vladislav Beronja*

1. Acacia Chan (she/her), *UT Austin*  
“A Shapeshifter in Hiatus: A Fan Fiction Reading of Jesus in The Acts of Andrew and Matthias”
2. Keith Wagner (he/him), *UT Austin*  
“Retelling the Past and Building Roma-futurism through New Media”
3. Nanjun Zhou (she/her), *UT Austin*  
“Revolt of Things and Images”

**2:00pm – 3:30pm**

**Panel 5. “On Being Human as Praxis”** Erotics, Ecologies and The Demonic (3.106)

*Panel moderator: Dr. Ashanté Reese*

1. Toluwani Roberts (she/they/he), *UT Austin*  
“Towards An Erotic “Initiation into Humanness” ”
2. Junika Hawker-Thompson (she/her), *UT Austin*  
“ “Surviving Transplantation and Other Traumas”: Black Femme Practices of Stillness and Movement”
3. Dr. Brent Crosson (he/him), *UT Austin*  
“A Demonic Anthropocene: Man, Nature, Supernature, and Race”

**3:45pm-5:00pm**

**Panel 6. “A Gulf Stream Ecclesiology: The Afro-Atlantic Metaphysical”** – Blanton Museum, Print Room 1<sup>st</sup> Floor.

Lauren Lluveras (she/her), UT Austin

Join us for a curated exhibit experience!

More information about the curation is available on page 16

## SATURDAY, APRIL 1ST

**10:00am** Registration opens. Breakfast tacos, fresh fruit, coffee, tea, and water will be available while supplies last. (3.114)

Prep/Quiet Room → Balcony Room A (3.106)

### 10:30am – 12:00pm

**Panel 7. “On Ends/Beginnings and Giving Humanness a Different Future by Giving It a Different Past”** Archive, Coloniality, and Racialization (3.112)

*Panel moderator: Dr. Patrick Walter*

1. Michael Cordova (all), *UT Austin*  
“Looking for Ted: Blackness, Psychedelic Humanism, and Silence”
2. Claudio Eduardo (they/them), *UT Austin*  
“Brujería Rhetoric: Archival Fear of the Feminine in the Mexican Inquisition Records”
3. \*Andrew Cutrone (he/they), *UT Austin*  
“Otherwise than the Ontological: The Case of Accomplice Work”

\*Virtual presenter

**Panel 8. “On Exoticizing Western Thought” Migrations, Transnationalism and Labor** (3.116)

*Panel moderator: Dr. Sonia Roncador*

1. \*Daniel Miranda (he/him), *UT Austin*  
“Bodies That Matter”
2. Amber Taylor (she/they), *UT Austin*  
"Imagining the Nation: Labor, Technology, and Trans-National Identity in the United States and Mexico"
3. Eliane Nascimento (she/her), *UT Austin*  
“Afro-Brazilian Entrepreneurship and the Protagonism of Black Women”

\*Virtual presenter

**12:00pm – 12:45pm Break for Lunch**

## 12:45pm-2:15pm

**Panel 9. “Rethinking Aesthetics: Notes Towards a Deciphering Practice”** Performance, Sonic Curation, and the Digital (3.112)

*Panel moderator: Dr. Hershini Young*

1. Mumtaz Hammad, (they/them) *UT Austin*  
“Rendering the Unfamiliar: Reimagining The Liquid Architecture of Nightlife”
2. Ozichi Okorom (she/her), *UT Austin*  
“ ‘Robot Got Future, I Don’t’: Black Femme Digital Liminalities and the Cultural Logics of Western Progress”
3. Faith Williams (she/they), *UT Austin*  
“Plastic Prosthesis: Making-up the Digital Self”

## 2:30pm-4:00pm

**Panel 10. “The Ceremony Must Be Found”** Literary Negotiations and Tackling Coloniality (3.112)

*Panel moderator: Dr. Richmond-Garza (she/they)*

1. Boya Lin (she/hers), *UT Austin*  
“A Monster and/or a Revolutionary: Bigger’s Dual Identity and Richard Wright’s Marxist-inflected Radicalism”
2. Orlando Zabala Figueroa (he/him), *UT Austin*  
“Fraternity and God’s Command in Émeric Bergeaud’s Stella”
3. Shukri Bana (she/her), *UT Austin*  
“A Too-Easy Intimacy”: Sympathy and Empathy in Black Autobiographical Writing”

**Panel 11. “On How We Mistook the Map for Territory”** Geographies, Mapping the Human, and its Others (3.116)

*Panel moderator: Dr. Kaily Heitz*

1. Alyssa Frick-Jenkins (she/they), *UT Austin*  
“Geographies of Unfathomable Blackness: Exploring Metaphorical and Material Realities through Black Women’s Discourse.”
2. Dr. Amy Frishkey (she/her), *Independent Scholar*  
“Standing the Test of Time: Neo-Traditionalism as Neoliberalism in Garifuna World Music”
3. Ana Equihua Ramirez (they/them), *UT Austin*  
“Flesh and Regulation: Undocumented Modes of Being and Immigrant Futurity”

**4:00pm – 5:15pm**

**Keynote Address.**

**“Maroon Geographies of Indigenous Blackness:  
Garifuna New Yorkers in/of  
Diaspora”**

**Dr. López Oro**

**Glickman Conference Center**

**RLP (1.302)**



**5:15pm – 6:30pm**

**Reception**

**Glickman Conference Center, RLP**

**DJ Mortalcoil**

## Conference Reception DJ

### Artist Bio: Mortalcoil

Mortalcoil (they/them) is a poet and resident of Bitches Play Music. An enshrouded horizon fire that unravels distinctions between genres and borders, their sets playfully re-weave meanings of global music– like a lyrist strumming light. They have worked with multiple platforms internationally though are currently based in Austin.

Soundcloud: <https://on.soundcloud.com/VeKj6>



## Conference Blanton Curation

### “A Gulf Stream Ecclesiology: The Afro-Atlantic Metaphysical”

– by Lauren Lluveras

The works in this pop-up curation bring together artists like Afro and Asian Cuban painter, Wilfredo Lam; Afro-Cuban printmaker, Belkis Ayon; Afro-Cuban multimedia artist, Maria Magdalena Campos Pons; Puerto Rican painter and printmaker, Myrna Baez; and Cuban-American multi-media artist, Ana Mendieta. The works are not only connected through the artists’ Caribbean identities, but each are also related through themes of Afro-Atlantic faith practices. In viewing these works together, participants are invited to consider how the artists’ different mediums, materials, and use of artistic movements nonetheless illuminate a transnational dialogue about memory, Africa, and the divine in the Caribbean. The Blanton Museum of Art, housed on the UT Austin campus, has a longstanding commitment to collecting and exhibiting Latino art and in February of this year, was gifted 5,000 Latino and Chicano works from a private collection. In the Blanton Museum’s Latino art holdings, the Caribbean is under-emphasized, perhaps creating space to consider prevailing ideas about Latinidad, race, and nationality.



## Keynote Information

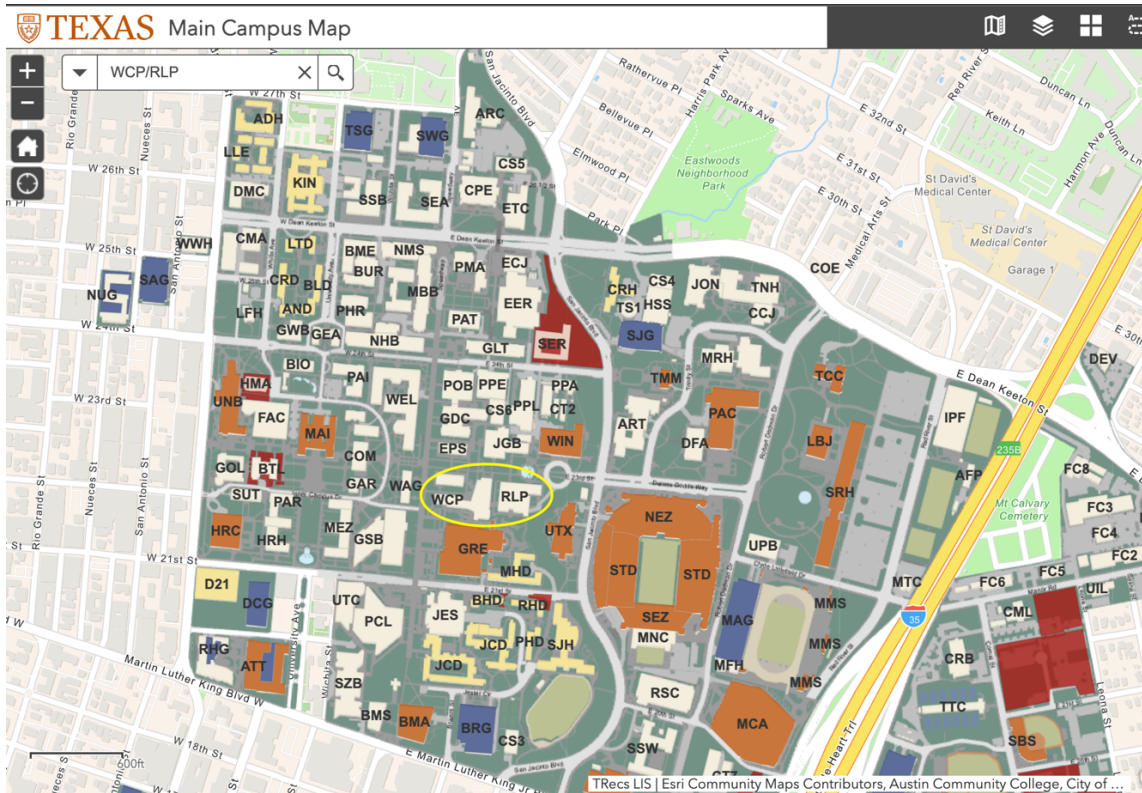
### About Dr. Paul Joseph López Oro, Ph.D.

Professor López Oro is a transdisciplinary scholar of Black Studies whose teaching and research lies at the intersections of multiple fields/conversations, such as Black Queer Diaspora Studies, Afro-Latin American/Afro-Latinx, Caribbean Studies, Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, and Native American & Indigenous Studies. Grounded in Black Queer Feminist methodologies and epistemologies he uses multi-sited archives, oral histories, film, social media, and critical ethnography to unearth the often understudied and undertheorized intellectual, political, spiritual, and cultural contributions embodied by Garifuna (Black Indigenous) women and queer-identified folks who are at the forefront of decades-long hemispheric movements of preserving Indigenous Blackness. His first book manuscript *Indigenous Blackness: The Queer Politics of Self-Making Garifuna New York* is a transdisciplinary ethnography on how gender and sexuality shape the ways in which transgenerational Garifuna New Yorkers of Central American descent negotiate, perform, and self-make their multiple subjectivities at the intersections of their: Blackness/Indigeneity/Central American Caribbean Latinidad.

Dr. López Oro received his doctorate in African and African Diaspora Studies from The University of Texas at Austin, his master's degrees in African American Studies from Northwestern University and in Latin American Studies from the University of New Mexico and his bachelor's degree in history from St. John's University. He has taught Black Studies and Latinx Studies courses at The University of Texas at Austin; Hunter College, The City University of New York; University of Virginia; and John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The City University of New York, and most recently at Smith College's Department of Africana Studies. He is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Hunter College of the City University of New York.

His research has been generously funded by the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program, Tinker Foundation Field Research Grant, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Interdisciplinary Cluster Fellowship in Latin American & Caribbean Studies, and the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies. He was the inaugural 2017–2018 Dissertation Fellowship in the Department of Mexican American and Latino Studies at the University of Texas at Austin and a 2018-2020 Predoctoral Fellowship at the Carter G. Woodson Institute for African American and African Studies at the University of Virginia. He was the 2021-2022 Miriam Jiménez Román Fellow at the Latinx Project at New York University's Department of Social & Cultural Analysis. He is currently a 2022-2023 Visiting Research Scholar in Ethnic Studies at the Institute of American Cultures and Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles.

# Maps



*Circled Area: The William C. Powers Student Activity Center (WCP) and Patton Hall (RLP), where the entirety of the conference will take place.*



*First and Third Levels of the WCP  
Circled Area Elevators to the Third Floor*

## Participant Bios

**Shukri Bana** (she/her) is a second year PhD student in African and African Diaspora Studies. Her work focuses principally on performances of apology in South Africa through history, popular culture, and creative writing.

**Teresa Blumenthal** is a third year PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include Heritage Spanish, language attitudes, educational motivation, Spanish in the U.S., and language acquisition. She is particularly interested in Spanish spoken in Texas, and the language attitudes related to Spanish in Texas.

**Michal Calo** (she/her) (Mikey) is a PhD student in the Department of English with a portfolio in Women and Gender Studies. She researches 20th century American women writers, focusing on expressions and embodied experiences of race, ethnicity, and queerness. She examines how women write themselves and their bodies into history against the grain of normative embodiments, temporalities, archives, and canons. Mikey is also interested in inclusive pedagogy and the public humanities and has served as co-coordinator of the Ethnic and Third World Literature annual symposium.

**Acacia Chan** (she/her) is a PhD student in the Comparative Literature program at The University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include fan fiction, ancient Christian apocrypha, and Greco-Roman humor. She holds a MA in Religion from Yale Divinity School and a BA in Biblical Languages from Walla Walla University.

**Michael Cordova** (any pronouns) is a researcher in the African & African Diaspora Studies at UT Austin. Their work focuses on the intersection between blackness (as a cultural production) and psychedelics. Michael examines the ways that film, music, and art serve to structure, struggle against, and perhaps even rupture normative constructions of black existences through trippy means. They are also invested in the tangential liminality of psychedelic experiences and black experiences as accounted within psychedelic archives.

**Dr. Brent Crosson** (he/him) is a socio-cultural anthropologist of religion, secularism, migration, and politics. His research has focused on contestations over the limits of legal power, science, race, and religion in the Americas. His first book--*Experiments with Power: Obeah and the Remaking of Religion in Trinidad*--is published with University of Chicago Press (2020). This monograph won the 2021 Clifford Geertz Prize from the Society for the Anthropology of Religion and was shortlisted for the Albert J. Raboteau Prize for the best book in Africana religions.

**Andrew Cutrone** (he/him or they/them) is a writer, scholar, educator, and PhD student in sociology at the University of Texas. His writing spans and connects a number of fields, including black and trans studies, abolition, history and historical fiction, autotheory, and philosophies of race and ethics. His writing has appeared in *Social Text* and is forthcoming in *South Atlantic Quarterly* and *Syndicate*.

**Claudio Eduardo** (they/them) is finishing a PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. In his research, he is working with concepts of archives of risk and affectionate reading to develop a queer methodology to study data collection in the Spanish and Mexican Inquisition Archives. In addition to his present work, Claudio holds an MA from University College London, where he specialized in silence in literature, and an MA from PUC-Rio, in Rio de Janeiro, where he wrote and published a thesis on intentionality in psychoanalytical and performativity theory.

**Alyssa Frick-Jenkins** (she/they) Alyssa Frick-Jenkins is a PhD student in the African and African Diaspora Studies department. She is interested in researching the sonic and embodied contours of Black, feminized and queer life. Focusing on Black women's critical choices to create different resonances through technologies of sound and performance, her objects of study are the mechanisms of the throat, mouth, curated audio-visuals and interactive space.

**Dr. Amy Frishkey** (she/her) is an Austin-based ethnomusicologist with a research focus on Afro-indigenous Central American and Caribbean popular music. She received her Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology from UCLA in 2016. Her first book, *Navigating Neo-Traditionalism in Garifuna Popular Music*, will be published by Lexington Books in early 2025.

**Dylan Gilbert** (he/him) is a fourth-year PhD student in Italian Studies and holds a BA and MA from Middlebury College. His work revolves around environmental histories of France and Italy, with a focus on radioactivity and nuclear waste. As a Fulbright recipient, he taught English in the southern Italian town of Policoro, and while here at UT, he teaches lower-division language courses in both Italian and French.

**Mumtaz Hammad** (they/them) Mumtaz Hammad is currently an MA student and multi/interdisciplinary artist at the University of Texas at Austin. They are an avid reader of Urdu and English, studying texts in both languages for interconnections that span through rhythm, devotion, and sound. Their current research analyzes a Sufi qawwali performance through a trans-textual reading that focuses on the written poem and material body, thinking alongside feminist and sonic studies. Beyond researching and writing, they are involved in deejay and installation performances in Austin as part of a nightlife collective that centers queer and trans people of color.

**Junika Hawker-Thompson** (she/her) is queer Black studies scholar whose work focuses on Black Guyanese women's spiritual, political, and artistic relationships to water. Broadly, she is interested in Black feminist literary and visual works that make us question what ecological, spiritual, and embodied freedom can look like.

**Boya Lin** (she/her) is a PhD Candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation focuses on the aesthetic adaptations and innovations of Marxism by Black radical thinkers in the US and the Caribbean. Her other areas of interest include 20th century African American and Francophone Caribbean literature, Marxist criticism, and postcolonialism.

**Lauren Lluveras** (she/her) is a PhD student in the Department of African & African Diaspora Studies where she is researching Afro-Atlantic religious materiality. This year, Lauren is the Blanton Museum's Graham Williford Education Fellow--a fellowship dedicated toward teaching through an inquiry-based learning and analysis pedagogy in museum settings.

**Dr. Rosy Mack** (she/her) Dr. Rosy Mack is a Teaching Fellow at the University of Birmingham (UK). She received her PhD from UT Austin in 2022. She lectures in 20th century literature, studies feminist and queer social movement print culture and fangirls about science fiction.

**Daniel Miranda** (he/him) Daniel Miranda is a first-year sociocultural anthropology Ph.D. student interested in cross-pollinating modes of anthropological and social inquiry. He is a writer and researcher who strives to study and write from the embedded and embodied, relational and affective spaces, impulses, and encounters in the U.S.-Mexico border and Latin America. Particularly, he is concerned with the ways in which place, body, and experience are entangled with knowing and becoming in ambiguous, multilayered cultural spaces in the Americas. Aging, death, and materiality in ordinary life are the intensities which widely frame his inquiry.

**Eliane Nascimento** (she/her) is an Afro-Brazilian, Sociologist with a master's degree in social sciences. She is a specialist in Brazilian Public Policies to Promote Racial Equality and a second-year Ph.D. student at African and African Diaspora Department.

**Ozichi Okorom** (she/her) is a PhD student in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies at UT Austin and multimedia artist. She studies Black femme performance and aesthetics within digital space through an exploration of Black vernacular digital creation, music video production, and visual art. Her research and artistic practice are concerned with the body and flesh and its relationship to the racial-sexual-visual economies of the digital.

**Ana Equihua Ramirez** (they/them) is a graduate student in the American Studies program at the University of Texas at Austin. Ana has a BA in English and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies from Dartmouth College. Their research interests include citizenship, racialization, border formation, and pop culture.

**Weston Richey** (they/them) is a writer and PhD student in the Department of English at The University of Texas at Austin. Before coming to UT, Weston earned a BA in philosophy and English from New York University and an MFA in creative writing from Rutgers University—Newark.

**Toluwani Roberts** (she/they/he) Toluwani Roberts (she/they/he) is a Black queer scholar and healer born in Lagos, Nigeria and raised in New York City. She is currently pursuing a PhD in African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Toluwani is dedicated to exploring Black Queer Healing in Nigeria and Cuba—especially eroticism, rituals, and artistic expressions as healing. He is also interested in studying farming and earthwork as an erotic and healing practice. Theories that trouble our understandings of human-being, Blackness, sex, queerness, geographies, and spirits tantalize all their senses. You can send readings, videos, and questions to [troberts@utexas.edu](mailto:troberts@utexas.edu).

**Thais Rutledge** (she/her) just defended her dissertation, “Intersectional Modernisms: Race, Gender, and Class Mobility in British and Brazilian Narratives.” Her works focuses on Brazilian and British modernisms with special intersectional focus where race, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality meet.

She has co-authored an article, “Formed by Place: Spatiality, Irony, and Empire in Conrad’s ‘An Outpost of Progress’” with Dr. Robert T. Tally. Her essay “Woolf’s Feminist Spaces and the New Woman in *To the Lighthouse*: The Cases of Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe” was published in the *South Central Review*.

**Garrett Shuffield** (he/him) is a third-year doctoral student in Middle Eastern Studies and an assistant instructor of Arabic at UT. His research focuses on contemporary Arabic literature, and particularly Palestinian narratives of return. He is also interested in critical pedagogy, second language education, and Egyptian hip-hop culture. On a personal note, he celebrated the birth of his first child on March 1.

**Fatemeh Soleimani** (she/her) is a UT graduate student in French Language and Literature. She has an academic background in literary studies and humanities and her research areas include French colonialism and its effect on women’s condition in Algeria, ecofeminism, and modernization.

**Amber Taylor** (she/they) is a PhD student in Comparative Literature. She studies labor history, focusing on 20th century worker-led movements in the United States and Mexico. She is primarily interested in public art and is currently working on the legacy of Mexican muralism in Detroit today.

**Nishant Upadhyay** (he/him) is a PhD Candidate in Asian Cultures and Languages at the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. His research interests include politics, literature, culture, and society in modern South Asia with special focus on India.

**Keith Wagner** (he/him) is a Comparative Literature PhD student at UT Austin. He works in French, Italian, and Romanian on 19th-21st century literary and material culture.

**Will Wasta Werner** (he/him) a current graduate student at UT, received his MA in Greek and Latin philology in 2022. Some of his current work focuses on Latin letter-writing and the role of Classics in 20th century American debates over Black education. He is especially interested in how DEI-centered pedagogy can strengthen the connection between language and culture for students.

**Faith Williams** (she/her or they/them) is a Ph.D. student in African and African Diaspora Studies who previously received her M.A. from UT's Center for Women's and Gender Studies. Her work broadly focuses on the ways Black queer and trans individuals digitally construct a sense of self online. Faith is especially interested in projects of digital self-making that retreat from the politics of visibility and render the self-illegible and unrecognizable to dominant structures. Her work is theoretically grounded in Black feminism, new media studies, and visual culture.

**Emma Wilson** (she/her) is a PhD candidate in UT's Comp Lit program. She is interested in queerness, temporality, and hauntings in Francophone literature.

**Orlando Zabala Figueroa** (he/him) is a PhD student in Comparative Literature. His main research interests include the Caribbean novel, trauma, and narratology.

**Nanjun Zhou** (she/her) is a fourth-year PhD student in the program of Comparative Literature at UT Austin. Working in Chinese, English and German, her dissertation project approaches the international woodcut movement around 1900 from a cultural studies and material culture perspective.

## Moderators

Dr. Naomi Lindstrom  
Dr. Thomas Garza  
Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza  
Dr. Kaily Heitz  
Dr. Ashanté Reese  
Dr. Vladislav Beronja  
Dr. Sonia Roncador  
Dr. Patrick Walter  
Dr. Hershini Young

## Panel Titles Citation

“The Rule is Love” from “Maskarade” by Sylvia Wynter

“On How We Mistook the Territory” from “On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory, and Reimprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of Desêtre: Black Studies Toward the Human Project” by Sylvia Wynter

“The Ceremony Must Be Found’ from “The Ceremony Must Be Found: After Humanism” by Sylvia Wynter

“Rethinking Aesthetics: Notes Towards a Deciphering Practice” by Sylvia Wynter

“On Exoticizing Western Thought” from “On How We Mistook the Map for the Territory, and Reimprisoned Ourselves in Our Unbearable Wrongness of Being, of Desêtre: Black Studies Toward the Human Project” by Sylvia Wynter

“On Ends/Beginnings and Giving Humanness a Different Future by Giving It a Different Past” from “Unparalleled Catastrophe For Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations” by Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick

“On Being Human as Praxis” from “Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis” by Katherine McKittrick

“Genre-Specific Narratives of Who “We” Are” from Unparalleled Catastrophe For Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations” by Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick

“Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom” from Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/ Power Truth/ Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation- An Argument" by Sylvia Wynter



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