

Committee on Ethnicity, Migration, Rights

Annual Report for Academic Year 2018-2019



The September meeting of the Student Advisory Council took place at Fernández's *Autumn* (...*Nothing Personal*) installation in Tercentenary Theatre. Photo by Teresita Fernández.



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Students attended a performance of Company One Theatre's *Miss You Like Hell*, a musical by Quiara Alegria Hudes (music and lyrics by Erin McKeown) about the relationship between a daughter and her mother who is facing an immigration hearing. An EMR student and EMR's Program Director participated in a talk-back panel about immigrant rights. Photo by Keish Kim.

Dear Colleagues, Friends, and Supporters of EMR:

At the end of the academic year, we want to take a moment to celebrate the contributions of EMR's intellectual community and the inspiring commitment of our students to engage rigorously some of the most vexing problems of our world through critical studies of coloniality, nationhood, immigration, ethnicity, indigeneity, and race.

We continue to strengthen our core programs, building structures that support and connect scholars at all levels. We closed this academic year with 58 secondary fielders and with new working groups in dissertation writing and Muslim American Studies. We completed the first full year of offering graduate student mentorship to thesis research grant recipients and of our monthly faculty talks on Approaches to Ethnic and Indigenous Studies across the disciplines.

This was also a year of rich collaboration with university partners—from piloting joint EMR/WGS portal courses, to a month of engagement with Teresita Fernández and her *Autumn (...Nothing Personal)* installation in Tercenary Theatre, to co-sponsoring events in the "Conversations on Asia America" series organized by lecturers in History and Literature. We especially thank our colleagues in American Studies; Harvard University Native American Program; History and Literature; the Instituto Cervantes; Romance Languages and Literatures; Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality; and the Warren Center for fruitful coordination of events and programs. As ethnic and indigenous studies at Harvard continue to evolve, we are ever grateful for the individual and collective commitments that make our work not only possible, but fulfilling.

Sincerely,

Mayra Rivera
Faculty Chair
Committee on Ethnicity, Migration, Rights



Core Programs of the Committee on Ethnicity, Migration, Rights

In addition to housing the undergraduate secondary fields in EMR and Latinx Studies, we now offer a slate of ongoing programs that support the work of undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty pursuing work in ethnic and indigenous studies. The collective goal of these efforts is to provide structures that support and challenge us academically, in environments that can welcome and inspire scholars of all levels.

Student Advisory Council (SAC)

SAC is a group of undergraduate and graduate students who serve as EMR's sounding board. SAC helps to disseminate information about EMR programs and events to other students, and is a space in which representatives from the secondary field, student organizations, and Working Groups brainstorm activities, collaborations, and recommendations for the program. SAC meets monthly on Fridays at noon, three times per semester.

Working Groups by Interest Area

EMR Working Groups support students in a variety of disciplines who share interests in EMR areas. In addition to proposing topics and speakers for EMR events, the working groups share and discuss research by faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates. They offer intergenerational space for scholarly engagement and mentoring. Currently, EMR supports Asian American Studies, Latinx Studies, Muslim American Studies, and Human Rights Working Groups.

Dissertation Writing Working Group

This working group, begun in fall of 2018, supports and fosters collaboration among post-exams doctoral students doing EMR-related research in any discipline or school. The group fosters collaboration and a sense of intellectual community among its members, and strengthens their research through peer critique and sustained intellectual engagement. Students are chosen through an application process and commit to participate for the full academic year. The group meets every 2-3 weeks.



Gabriela Soto Laveaga, Professor of the History of Science, kicked off the series of lunch talks on *Approaches to Ethnic and Indigenous Studies Across the Disciplines*. Held monthly in EMR, these talks focus on questions of methodology and aim to build transdisciplinary intellectual community.

Core programs, continued:

Senior Thesis Research Grants and Mentoring

Each spring, EMR awards grants to rising seniors to support thesis research in EMR areas. Students receiving these awards are assigned a graduate student mentor who works in a related area of research. Mentors and mentees meet approximately once a month until the thesis is submitted, and graduate mentors give feedback on at least two full chapter drafts.

Approaches to Ethnic and Indigenous Studies Across the Disciplines Series

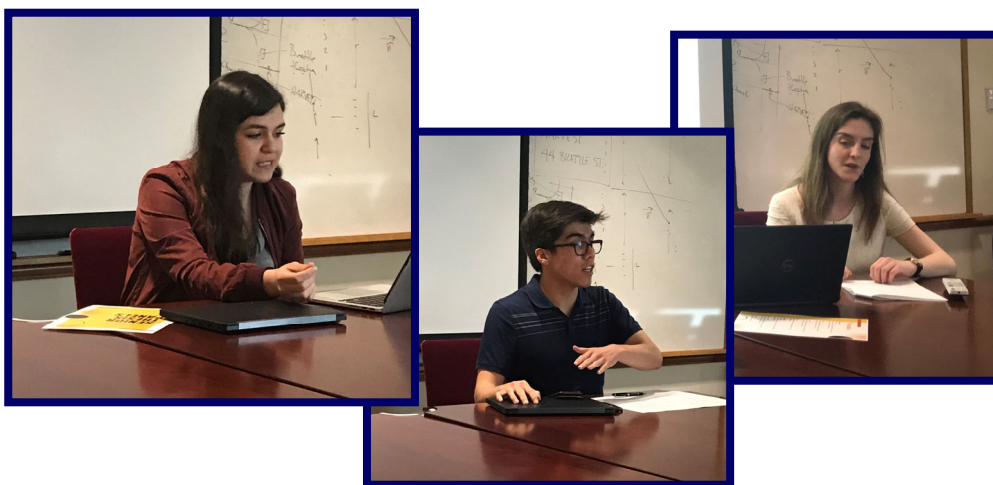
This monthly series hosts informal conversations with faculty from Harvard and beyond about how ethnic and/or indigenous studies shape scholarship that occurs under various disciplinary headings. These events are organized by EMR and co-sponsored with the relevant department when possible.

We understand “Ethnic and Indigenous Studies” to refer to interdisciplinary scholarship that analyzes the production of differences based on race, ethnicity, and nation in their relationships with sexuality, gender, religion, and other markers. Engaging critically non-Eurocentric traditions of knowledge, these approaches seek an expansive relation to specific disciplines.

Our speakers for this inaugural year of the series were Gabriela Soto Laveaga in History of Science, Natasha Warikoo in Education, Noe Montez (Tufts University) in Theatre and Performance, Stephanie Rivera Berruz (Marquette University) in Philosophy, Ajantha Subramanian in Anthropology, and Phil Deloria in History.

EMR Internship

Each semester, a doctoral student whose work aligns with EMR’s areas of study works as a paid intern performing a combination of self-initiated projects and activities that support the work of the Committee. Interns frequently choose to engage the student community in creative endeavors. Our fall 2018 intern, Amanda Figueroa from American Studies, coordinated discussions and events at the *Autumn (...Nothing Personal)* installation and ran an ethnic studies Wiki-athon. Spring 2019 intern Keish Kim, also from American Studies, engaged undergraduate members of the Student Advisory Council in a photography project that captured students’ notions of “Home” and “Embrace.”



Summer 2018 thesis research grant recipients presented on their completed theses at the EMR Senior Thesis Panels in May.

Pictured, from left to right, are Michelle Borbon, José Avonce, and Grace Evans.

Highlights from the Working Groups



Genevieve Clutario moderated a panel on U.S. Militarism in Asia and the Pacific, featuring speakers Simeon Man, Juliet Nebolon, and Dean Saranillio.

EMR working groups engage faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates from across the university, and provide opportunities to share academic work, and to participate in other activities that support and enhance shared intellectual life. Faculty directors and graduate coordinators steer each group's activities in collaboration with EMR leadership.

Asian American Studies Working Group

The year kicked off with a panel on U.S Militarism in Asia and the Pacific that drew 60 attendees from across Harvard and the wider Boston area. Graduate student coordinators organized a late fall event on "Demystifying the Senior Thesis" in collaboration with History and Literature and the Harvard Libraries. In the spring, Celine Parreñas Shimizu gave a talk entitled "Making the Compassionate Spectator: Annihilation and Affliction in the Films of Brillante Mendoza." The working group co-hosted events in the provostial series *Conversations in Asia America*, organized by Catherine Nguyen, Mark Sanchez, and Ellen Song in History and Literature. The series featured Lawrence-Minh Bui Davis and Mimi Khúc's workshop "urgent (self)care: a pop-up wellness space," Bui Davis's lecture "By way of protest+magic: imagining a career that doesn't exist," Trinh Mai's artist talk "Word Becomes Flesh," and Mai's workshop "That We Should Be Heirs: Letting Go and Reclaiming Our Inherited Strength." The final event of the year was "Writing Asian America: A Reading and Conversation with Three Poets," co-sponsored with the Asia Center. Tamiko Beyer, Paul Tran, and Emily Yun shared work and discussed their relationships to Asian American identities and creative communities.

Latinx Studies Working Group

The first event of the year was a workshop with poet and activist-storyteller Yosimar Reyes, who guided participants in reflecting on how experience and social identity interact in creative non-fiction narratives. The working group held a discussion entitled, "What is Latinx?" with tap dancer and choreographer Ayodele Casel. Casel also treated members to an impromptu observation of her practicing in the new ArtLab. The group organized a mock job talk for a doctoral student colleague, co-sponsored with the Latinx Student Association. The year closed with a celebration for the undergraduate-edited Latinx literary magazine *Palabritas*, featuring readings by contributors. All events of the Latinx Studies Working Group are generously supported by the Instituto Cervantes.



Poet Yosimar Reyes led a storytelling workshop for graduate and undergraduate students.

Working Groups, cont.



Working group leaders invited Sylvia Chan-Malik (far right), professor of American Studies and Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University, to keynote the Islam in America symposium.

Muslim American Studies Working Group

This new working group began meeting late fall and held its first event, the *Islam in America* symposium, on April 25. Sylvia Chan-Malik lectured on the life and legacy of Betty Shabazz, exploring her significance for Muslim American and ethnic studies. The symposium also featured student research presentations and feedback sessions.

Dissertation Writing Working Group

Ten doctoral students from African and African American Studies, American Studies, Anthropology, History, History of Science, and Public Health participated in the first year of EMR's working group for dissertation writers. Meetings opened with planned activities facilitated by the EMR director, group members, or a guest, and centered around discussion of members' work. Participants ranged from prospectus to completion stages, and varied widely in methodological orientation.

Feedback excerpts

"My experience with the EMR Dissertation Writing Group was nothing short of phenomenal...I looked forward to every meeting, and the support I received here helped me persist through the rigors of writing."

"Different (in a good way) from all the other working groups I've previously attended. More caring sense of community, more sensitive comments...Ideal for folks working in interdisciplinary methods."

Prizes and Grants

Congratulations to Anwar Omeish, winner of the 2019 EMR Senior Thesis Prize!

Anwar's senior thesis, "Toward the Modern Revolution: Frantz Fanon, Secularity, and the Horizons of Political Possibility in Revolutionary Algeria," argues that anticolonial thinker Frantz Fanon presumes a binary between modern and traditional that limits his own political critique and occludes the subversive work of Algerian Muslim thinkers and actors in his midst. The committee was struck by the subtlety and complexity with which this work engages a vast range of discourses including psychoanalysis, existentialism, *Négritude*, and Islamic ethics. This thesis examines interconnected issues of race, ethnicity, religion, and coloniality with a rare combination of breadth and precision. It opens the door to new ways of reading an essential figure for postcolonial and ethnic studies.



Summer Thesis Research Grants

EMR awarded a total of thirteen grants to rising seniors, including three in Asian American/Pacific Islander Studies, and four in Latinx Studies. Funding for Asian American/Pacific Islander Studies and Latinx Studies research grants was made possible by generous support from **alumni donors to the EMR Fund**, and by **Instituto Cervantes**.

Joint Portal Courses in EMR and WGS

EMR Program Director Eleanor Craig and WGS Director of Undergraduate Studies Caroline Light piloted two new courses that count for the "portal" requirement in the EMR secondary field. These courses were designed in conversation, both aiming to demonstrate the inextricability of studies of race and ethnicity from studies of gender and sexuality. Caroline Light's WGS 1283/EMR 131 *Love's Labor's Found: Uncovering Histories of Emotional Labor*, examines the political and social arrangements of racialized and gendered forms of work. This course interrogates the racial and gendered valuations and power structures that underlie the status and distribution of emotional labor.

Eleanor Craig's EMR 133/WGS 1204 *Power, Knowledge, Identity: Critical Approaches to Race and Ethnicity* serves as a theories and methods course for ethnic studies. It equips students with interdisciplinary tools to assess the premises, values, and assumptions undergirding academic work.

Members of EMR 133/WGS 1204 attended a production of Company One Theatre's *Vietgone*, a play by Qui Nguyen.



Who we are...

EMR Faculty Advisory Committee for the 2019-2020 academic year: Robin Kelsey (Dean), Mayra Rivera (Chair), Eram Alam (History of Science), Bruno Carvalho (Romance Languages and Literatures/RLL), Lorgia García Peña (RLL), Roberto Gonzales (Graduate School of Education), Ieva Jusionyte (Anthropology), Lauren Kaminsky (History and Literature), Jinah Kim (History of Art and Architecture), Ju Yon Kim (English), Matthew Liebmann (Anthropology), Shelly Lowe (Harvard U. Native American Program), María Luisa Parra (RLL), Robert Reid-Pharr (Women, Gender, and Sexuality), Raquel Vega-Durán (RLL).

On leave: Glenda Carpio (English and African and African American Studies), Philip Deloria (History), Todne Thomas (Divinity School).

EMR Staff

Administrative and Program Director, Lecturer: Eleanor Craig
Program and Communications Assistant: Caroline DeVane



EMR Intern

Massiel Torres Ulloa

Asian American Studies Working Group

Faculty Director: Ju Yon Kim

Graduate Student Coordinators: Karintha Lowe, Jewel Pereyra



Latinx Studies Working Group

Faculty Director: Lorgia García Peña

Graduate Student Coordinators: Adrián Rodríguez Ríos, Laura Pérez Muñoz

Muslim American Studies Working Group

Faculty Director: Soha Bayoumi

Graduate Student Coordinator: Hamzah Raza

Undergraduate Coordinator: Zainab Kahloon

Human Rights Working Group

Undergraduate Coordinator: Matthew Hirschfeld



Contact us at emr@fas.harvard.edu. You can follow us on Facebook (Ethnicity, Migration, Rights at Harvard University) and on Instagram ([emr_harvard](https://www.instagram.com/emr_harvard)).