

EMR

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021-22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR	03
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS AND EMR NEWS	05
EMR IN THE NEWS	07
ONGOING PROGRAMS	08
NEW IN 2022-23	10
THESES	10
PEOPLE OF EMR	14

Local Uyghur activist Shayida Ali at the Uyghur Culture Fest hosted by the EMR Human Rights Working Group.
Photo by Leah J. Teichholtz



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear EMR community,

When I wrote my first letter to you as Chair of EMR in June of 2021, I thought we had just concluded one of the most challenging years in our lives as a community. But 2021-2022 posed many challenges of its own. Our national and transnational approach to the study of ethnicity, migration, rights, and indigeneity kindled our concerns about many current events. Harsh anti-immigration policies proliferate around the world; Russia started a war against Ukraine; thousands of migrants continue to perish on perilous journeys across the English Channel, the Strait of Gibraltar, and the South China Sea; over eighty-four million people are now displaced from their homes; Indigenous peoples have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic; and violence against Asian Americans keeps growing. Our conversations about these events and trends have been emotional and complicated, even as they have helped us better understand the world today. The studies of ethnicity, migration, and indigeneity have been in close dialogue in our courses, lectures, and workshops; our students, faculty, guest speakers, and staff have proven that the global conversations that emerge in EMR are part of a knowledge that transforms.

Over the past ten years, interest in EMR has been growing steadily among undergraduate students at Harvard. We started with a sole secondary fielder in 2010, and by spring 2022 over 230 students had obtained a secondary field in EMR and Latinx Studies. We ended the year 2021-2022 with 72 declared secondary fielders. Harvard Visitas was a great success with over fifty students attending our event, and we look forward to getting to know the new cohort of EMR students. We are becoming a robust presence on campus, thanks to the strong sense of community we have been building in order to fight the sense of disconnection brought by the pandemic, as well as to the broad set of perspectives and disciplines we include in our courses and an ever-growing interest among undergraduates in our core fields of study. This year, we were thrilled that we could now teach and meet our students in person, but we also made use of Zoom to invite many guest speakers, such as *New York Times* photojournalist Kirsten Luce, interdisciplinary artist Arleene Correa Valencia, *Los Angeles Times* journalist Fidel Martínez, organizer for Cambridge HEART/Black Response Cambridge Stephanie Guirand, and affirmative action advocate/EMR alumna Sally Chen.

Everything we have done this year has entered into EMR’s larger narrative as a space where we welcome and support the sustained and interdisciplinary study of interconnections among ethnicity, indigeneity, and migration and border studies, from a local to a global perspective. We are a successful secondary field where students can take a rich variety of courses from our interdivisional course catalog, but we still cannot count on the number of faculty and courses that we would need to maintain stable offerings. That is why we just have launched a number of new initiatives to support a comprehensive understanding of interconnections among our main fields. We inaugurated 2021-2022 with the series “Topics,” a set of introductory-level courses to ethnicity, migration, and indigeneity. In the spirit of strengthening and consolidating our interdisciplinary intellectual vision, we also created the EMR Scholars program, which brings together students from diverse backgrounds, interests, and disciplinary training in a series of workshops and provides cohorts of committed scholars an opportunity for deep academic engagement. As part of the Arts and Humanities Division, we seek to emphasize the importance of the language of art in both civic engagement and scholarship, and so we started the series *Artivism: Making a Difference through Art and Activism*. The performance of Mariachi Veritas to celebrate the Latinx Heritage Month, the exhibit curated by the students of the portal course *Understanding Immigration through Film and Photography*, and the variety of provocative and original topics seniors explored in their theses were wonderful contributions to EMR’s interdisciplinary and global approach.

The year 2022 is also bringing many new and exciting initiatives. We will be hosting four new EMR Scholar workshops and two *Artivism* talks; we are launching the brand-new reading group *Migrant Voices*; we will join the celebration of the Indigenous Languages Decade with a series of events; and we will offer many new courses, such as *Memory and Diaspora* and *Quechua, Indigenous Language Revitalization, and Global Indigeneity*. In the Spring we will offer the new interdisciplinary course *Migration*, which will bring together eight Harvard faculty from different departments and schools, as well as five additional guest speakers. We will be informing you of all these events in our weekly newsletter!

EMR could not succeed without the support of our whole community. We are grateful to all the students who have brought their interests and innovative perspectives to our courses – and to the faculty who have developed such engaging courses for the EMR catalog. EMR staff members Eleanor Craig, Andrea Davies, and Eiji Miura bring their dedication and skill to our community every day, and we are indebted for all the hard work that has helped us grow and thrive. Our many guest speakers have enriched and expanded our narrative. We are grateful to all the members of the Standing Committee for working together to create a comprehensive narrative of EMR. And we thank the Asia Center; the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History; the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies; the Department of Anthropology; the Department of Art, Film and Visual Studies; the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures; donors to the EMR Fund; the Elson Family Arts Initiative Funds; History and Literature; the Harvard University Native American Program; the Observatorio Cervantes; and the Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality for their support and enriching collaborations. Finally, a special thank you to the Office of the Dean of Arts and Humanities for their support and grants that that have made it possible for us to launch many of our new initiatives.

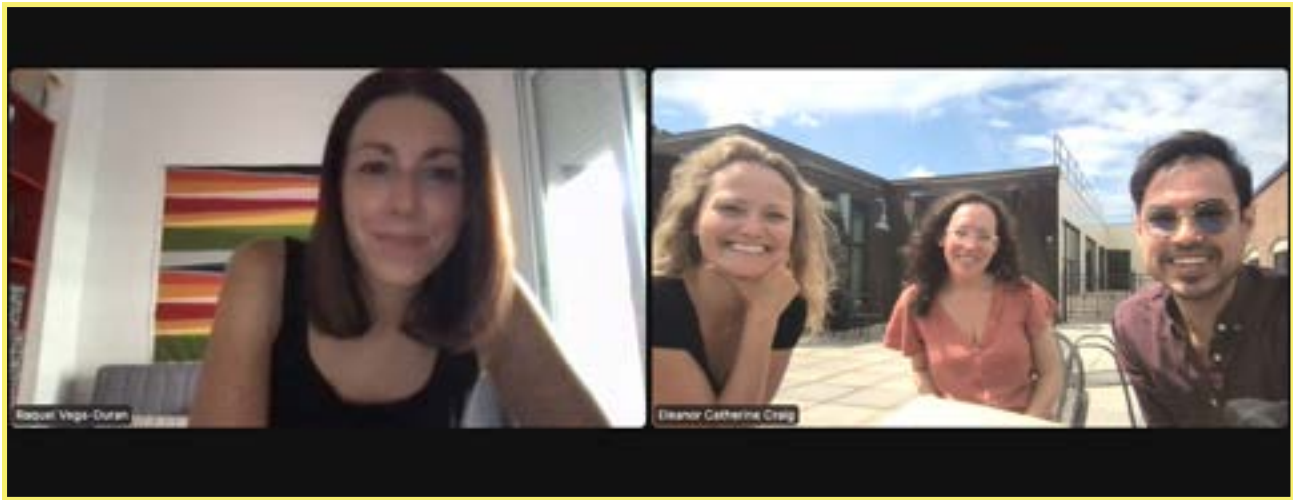
We are committed to maintaining excellence in our courses, to encouraging new ways of understanding our core fields, to including underrepresented voices in our conversations – and to raising new questions that will help us advance our knowledge about the study of migration, ethnicity, and indigeneity. We always welcome your suggestions for how to continue integrating EMR’s core fields into the Harvard curriculum.

Thank you for your commitment to EMR. We look forward to continuing all these conversations in the year to come.

Sincerely,



Raquel Vega-Durán
Faculty Chair, Committee on Ethnicity, Migration, Rights



EMR Administrative Team, from left to right: Raquel Vega-Durán, Andrea Davies, Eleanor Craig, and Eiji Miura.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Américo Mendoza-Mori Bridges Latinx and Indigenous Studies

EMR was delighted to welcome Américo Mendoza-Mori, Lecturer in Latinx Studies, to the program. His pedagogy, campus engagement, and work as faculty director of the Latinx Studies Working Group have been an invigorating force for EMR’s programs and campus presence.



Pictured: Américo Mendoza–Mori, Lecturer in Latinx Studies and Faculty Director, Latinx Studies Working Group

Before coming to Harvard, Mendoza-Mori was founder and coordinator of the University of Pennsylvania’s Quechua program, co-founder of [The Quechua Alliance](#), and co-founder of the [Thinking Andean Studies](#) international conference. He has been a cultural consultant for theater and film, including Paramount Pictures’ movie *Dora and the Lost City of Gold* in 2019. He has been involved in educational and community-based initiatives in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and the United States. He holds a B.A. from Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, in Lima (Peru), and has a Ph.D. from the University of Miami, Florida.

This year, Mendoza-Mori taught two courses that serve as portals for EMR program requirements: *Topics in Latinx Studies* and *Latinx Representations in Media, Film, and Popular Culture*. He also offered the seminars *Covid-19, Inequality, and the Latinx Community* and *Indigeneity and Latinidad*. In the coming year, he will offer a new seminar on *Quechua, Indigenous Language Revitalization, and Global Indigeneity*. His work in and between Latinx and Indigenous studies exemplifies the relational frameworks essential to EMR’s interdisciplinary methods.

See below for recent media featuring Mendoza-Mori’s work and expertise.

EMR NEWS

This year EMR inaugurated two new programs that will continue into 2022-23: the [EMR Scholars Program](#) and the series *Artivism: Making a Difference through Art and Activism*.

EMR Scholars

One of EMR’s strengths is that it brings together students with diverse backgrounds, interests, and disciplinary training. We started the EMR Scholars program, a workshop series that explores the interconnections of our core fields. The goal of these workshops is to offer a small cohort of committed students (4-5 per workshop) an opportunity for deep academic engagement to examine the rich possibilities for dialogue across focus areas and the interdisciplinary nature of EMR. We offered the first workshop in the Spring of 2022.

Our first cohort of EMR Scholars, Ada Cruz, Nikhil Dharmaraj, Hannah Hope Tsai Kim, Ngoc Tram Nguyen, and Izumi H. Vazquez, participated in a workshop called *Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Latinx Intersections* with professor Paula Park of Wesleyan University. Park’s research and teaching interests are Latin American literature/ culture and Philippine literature in Spanish and English from the twentieth century. She focuses on exile writers, Orientalism, Asian diasporas, Transpacific studies, and sound studies.

Artivism: Making a Difference through Art and Activism

With support from the Division of Arts and Humanities, EMR reignited our longstanding focus on work that combines artistic and activist endeavors.

The first of our student-centered events was a facilitated conversation called **Student Artivism in a Pandemic: Creating for Community**. Doctoral student and EMR working group coordinator Massiel Torres joined undergraduate editors of *Palabritas* and *The Wave*, Harvard literary and arts magazines nurturing cultural production in Latinx and Asian Anglophone communities respectively. Panelists reflected on their experiences of live and remote collaboration, print and online platforms. The two groups found unexpected synchronicity in longer term commitments to building solidarity and understanding within and across panethnic groups.



Pictured: student representatives from The Wave and Palabritas literary magazines

Kayhan Irani delivered an engaged theatrical workshop, **There is a Portal: Micro Gestures Toward Possibility**, based on the digital performance project *There is a Portal* that will launch this summer. Irani offered the following introduction to the work:

We are each accompanied by a constellation of artifacts (image, sound, sensation) that are gifts from our ancestors, our teachers, our cultural guides and mentors. These artifacts are sources of power that signal to us despite being buried, disregarded, or erased in the process of assimilation and submission to systems of domination. Through There is a Portal's performance as pedagogy, we will use memory, story, movement, and imagination to connect to these sources of power, cultural resilience, and smarts and reclaim our innate healing potential through fracture.

Participants previewed an excerpt from the larger performance, which served as a prompt for written and spoken engagement.

New Courses

In order to strengthen the structure and stability of the EMR curriculum, we created the new series of courses “Topics” to complement our already popular “Portal” courses. We launched the series Topics with EMR 1020 *Topics in Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies* and EMR 1010 *Topics in Latinx Studies*. We also offered four new or heavily redesigned courses this year: *Latinx Representation in Media, Films, and Popular Culture*, *Indigeneity and Latinidad*, *COVID-19, Inequality, and the Latinx Community*, and *Understanding Migration through Film and Photography* (Portal).

During 2021-22, we welcomed many guest speakers to our courses: Alejandra Martinez (KERA News; NPR Dallas), Kareli Lizarraga (Arizona State University), Sandy Cos (Howard Community College), Stephanie Guirand (Cambridge HEART), Candy Hurtado (Florida Atlantic University), Felipe H. Lopez (Seton Hall University), Fidel Martinez (Los Angeles Times), Grace Gomez (NBC Boston/Telemundo Nueva Inglaterra), Kirsten Luce (The New York Times; National Geographic), Minju Bae (New York University), Sally Chen (Chinese for Affirmative Action), and activist Arlene Correa Valencia.

Our undergraduate students were also very involved in celebrating the content of our courses. Examples of that are the performance of Mariachi Veritas at the steps of Widener during Latinx Heritage Month, and the exhibit Migration in Visual Culture curated by the students of Understanding Migration through Film and Photography.

EMR IN THE NEWS

EMR has appeared in the news on several occasions this year:

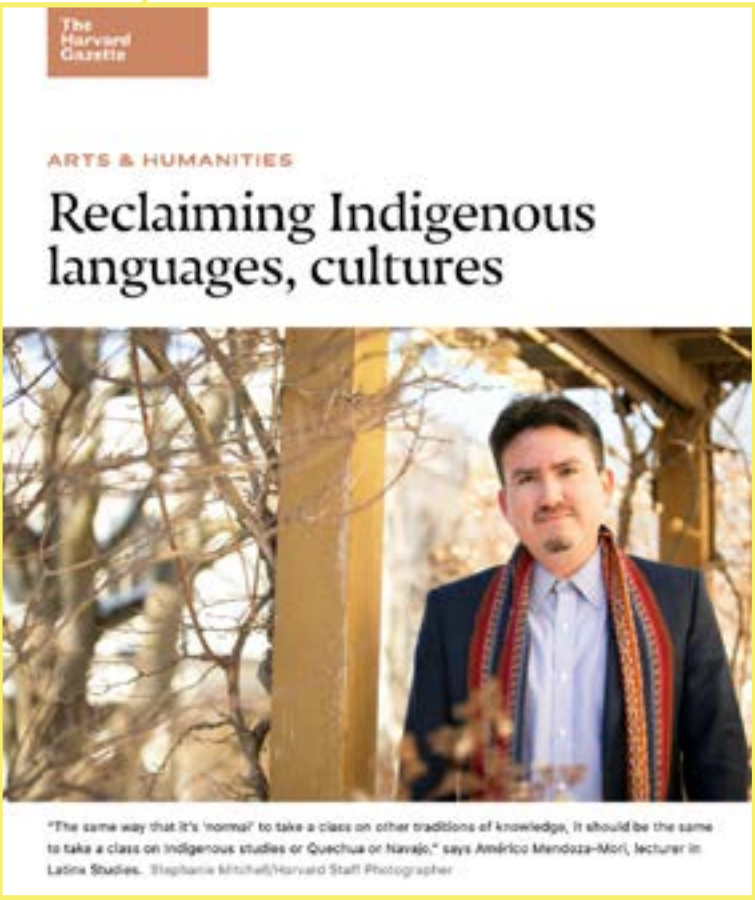
- Américo Mendoza-Mori was featured this year in the [Harvard Gazette](#) for his work on reclaiming Indigenous languages and cultures. He was also interviewed by [The New York Times](#) for their recent feature about the addition of the Quechua language to Google Translate.
- Spanish 150: *Migration and Border-Crossing in Film and Photography*, a course taught by EMR Faculty Chair Raquel Vega-Durán, was featured in [The Harvard Crimson](#) for its student-curated exhibit on migration. The exhibit was on display in Boylston hall from April 25 - May 20, 2022.
- [The Harvard Crimson](#) also did a feature on an Uyghur Culture Fest hosted by EMR's Human Rights Working Group. The event was a celebration of Uyghur culture as well as a call-to-action for the human rights violations that continue to be inflicted upon the Uyghur people.

'Allinllachu.' Google Translate Adds Quechua to Its Platform.

The addition of one of the most widely spoken Indigenous languages in the Americas could help public servants and health workers connect with their communities. (And by the way, "allinllachu" means hello.)



Pictured: screenshot of NY Times article from May 31, 2022 for which Américo Mendoza-Mori was interviewed.



ONGOING PROGRAMS

Student Advisory Council (SAC)

Fall SAC meetings convened online. They focused on supporting student working group leaders in the transition back to campus, as they organized a vibrant mix of in-person, hybrid, and online meetings and events.



Pictured: Guangping Chu

The spring semester focused on reinvigorating our SAC community, and began moving into hybrid and in-person formats. EMR invited guest facilitators for a workshop series on purposeful and sustainable leadership. Each of these guests is a cultural worker who combines creative practices focused on embodiment with work for social justice. Guangping Chu joined us for our February SAC meeting. Chu has taught ethnic studies in Boston Public Schools and has contributed to the Ethnic Studies Now! campaign of the Boston Teachers Union. They practice qigong and Buddhist meditation in the Plum Village tradition, and are a mindfulness meditation facilitator committed to honoring their ancestors and creating possibilities for future generations.



Pictured: Kayhan Irani

Our March SAC guest speaker was Emmy-award winning writer, performer, cultural activist, and Theatre of the Oppressed trainer Kayhan Irani. Irani the daughter of an Irani father, whose parents migrated to Bombay from Yazd, and a Parsi mother, whose ancestors migrated to India pre-colonization. She was born in Bombay and raised in New York City where her love of storytelling was fed by rich and varied forms of cultural expression and nurtured her passion for social change through art. She works internationally and within the U.S. with community organizations, social service providers, educators, and government agencies on projects to deepen participants’ relationships to culture, story, and community. She is currently building [There is a Portal \(thereisaportal.com\)](https://thereisaportal.com), an immersive digital experience, pedagogy, and refugee leadership development model that asks how we can create networks of belonging even when we feel most broken.



Pictured: Azmera Hammouri-Davis

Azmera Hammouri-Davis (MTS Harvard Divinity School), our guest speaker for April’s SAC meeting, is a Black-Palestinian American womanist, spoken word poet and producer, and Africana spirituality practitioner from Kea’au, Hawai’i. She has over a decade of experience teaching and training in the Afro-Brazilian martial art of Capoeira. Hammouri-Davis leads community engagements at Harvard Radcliffe Institute and is also known as the Poetic Theorist (www.azm-era.com, @azmerarhymes).

Working Groups

Latinx Studies Working Group

LSWG’s kick-off event served the joint purpose of welcoming back our student members and bringing new visiting and teaching scholars in Latinx studies into Harvard’s EMR and ethnic studies community. We were pleased to welcome Américo Mendoza-Mori (EMR, LSWG faculty advisor), Thomas Connors (History and Literature), Nicole Eitzen Delgado (Mahindra Center), Kris Klein-Hernández (Warren Center), and Jorge Sánchez Cruz (Romance Languages and Literatures).

In the spring semester, LSWG hosted a talk by Mahindra Center postdoctoral fellow Barbara Sostaita who spoke about her anthropological work on fugitive care and sanctuary in the southwestern U.S. The group also hosted reading-based discussions on Afro-Latinx topics and an Afro-Latinx social. The year concluded with a co-sponsored conversation with the Muslim American Studies Working Group with guest Omar Ramadan-Santiago. Dr. Ramadan-Santiago is an anthropologist who studies Afro-diasporic religions in Puerto Rico. The conversation focused on connections between artistic and scholarly practice, intersections between Latinx and Muslim American studies, and postdoctoral careers beyond academia.

Muslim American Studies Working Group

MASWG kicked off its regular meetings with a well-attended and lively opening dinner. The group held a spring meeting with Sherman Jackson, distinguished scholar of Islamic law, theology, and intellectual history. Prof. Jackson has written extensively on Islam in the West and Islam in America. He offered deep and challenging insights about the importance of historical depth and language study in western institutional contexts. MASWG closed out the year with a jointly sponsored conversation with the Latinx Studies Working Group featuring Omar Ramadan-Santiago (described above).

Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies Working Group

The AAPISWG kickoff began a conversation that lasted throughout the year about the term “AAPI”—its problems, potentials, and challenges for both scholarship and political affiliation. AAPISWG meetings drew Harvard community members from FAS, the Kennedy School of Government, the Medical School, the Divinity School, and the Chan School of Public Health.

Human Rights Working Group

The Human Rights Working Group’s proramming this year focused primarily on highlighting and addressing the atrocities being perpetrated against Uyghur people in Xinjiang, China. Their first event, an Uyghur Culturefest, yielded 80 attendees, and shared Uyghur culture, showcased local Uyghur talent, and educated participants on the human rights violations the Uyghur people continue to face today. The working group also hosted a talk with Rayhan Asat, HLS ‘16, about Uyghur Human Rights and Foreign Policy.

In the spring semester, the working group hosted three Uyghur activists and partnered with Free Uyghur Now for a panel discussion. On April 21, they co-hosted the 6th anniversary commemoration of Ekpar Asat’s imprisonments with HLS Advocates. Finally, HRWG laid the foundation for a collaboration with The Right to Immigration Institute (TRII) with the hopes of training a Harvard cohort in immigration and asylum law, such that Harvard students can provide support to refugees.

Dissertation Writing Working Group

The Dissertation Writing Working Group met nine times over the academic year to provide community and feedback to doctoral students working in ethnic, Indigenous, and migration studies. Each meeting began with a member-led opening exercise to center and connect the group, and was followed by workshopping sessions on pre-circulated chapter drafts. This year was made particularly special by its culmination in three members graduating with their doctoral degrees. Congratulations to newly minted PhDs James Almeida (History), Balraj Gill (American Studies), and Annikki Herranen-Tabibi (Anthropology)!

Approaches to Ethnic and Indigenous Studies

These informal talks with scholars from Harvard and beyond offer insights into the methodologies and academic journeys of academics in various areas of ethnic and Indigenous Studies. Our speakers this year were Anthony Romero (Tufts University and Harvard AFVS), Vivek Bald (Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard AAAS), Ju Yon Kim (Harvard English, EMR, and TDM), and Sherman Jackson (University of Southern California). Our speakers highlighted topics like colonialist soundscapes, community engaged research methods, the affective dimensions of ethnic studies writing, and the importance of historical depth and authoritative breadth for Muslim American studies.

NEW IN 2022-23

We are currently working on a number of new initiatives that will open the 2022-23 academic year. We will:

- launch our first EMR reading group *Voices of Migration*
- organize four EMR Scholars workshops (on Afrodiaspora, Global Indigeneity, Transnational Migrations, and Migration and Ethnic Studies).
- facilitate two new *Artivism: Making a Difference through Art and Activism* talks.
- join the celebration of the beginning of the [Decade of Indigenous Languages](#) with a series of events.

And the EMR curriculum will grow with new course offerings, such as *Quechua, Indigenous Language Revitalization and Global Indigeneity; Memory and Diaspora; Migration, Refugees, and Human Rights* (cross-listed with HKS); *"A Place Called Home": Histories of Spatial Discrimination and Ethnic Migration in the United States*; and the interdivisional course *Migration*.

THESES

Summer Thesis Research Grants

Each year, EMR awards summer research funding to a cohort of rising seniors planning to write theses. Grant recipients are paired with doctoral scholars in aligned areas of study who mentor their thesis writing through the summer and school year, until thesis submission.



Pictured: this year's Grantees. Top row, from left to right: Rosa Flores, Keana Gorman, Marissa Joseph, Chloe Koulefanou
Bottom row, from left to right: Jeromel Lara, Anissa Medina, James Walkingstick

Not Pictured: Thuan Tran

This year's grant winners will be conducting research in the following areas:

Rosa Flores, *Sustaining Life: The Absolution of The Rio Grande* (Anthropology and Government)

This project takes Rio Grande/Rio Bravo and Brownsville, Texas as sites from which to examine the colonial construction of the Southwest Mexican border and the impact of historical and present border policies on migrants, surrounding communities, and nonhuman species.

Mentor: Dylan Nelson (American Studies)

Keana Gorman, *The Navajo Ceremonial System* (History and Literature)

This thesis will study the Navajo Ceremonial System through a collection of 1,300+ wax cylinder recordings located at the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, including the ceremonial work of nádleeh, or "2-spirit," Navajo healer Hosteen Klah.

Mentor: Anthony Trujillo (American Studies)

Marissa Joseph, *Who's(e) Ayiti: Investigating Representations of the Haitian Revolution in the Cuban Imaginary* (History and Literature)

This study of decolonial legacies of the Haitian Revolution reads the transnational works of 1940s Afro-Cuban writers who were fascinated with Haiti as a symbol of resistance.

Mentor: Massiel Torres (Romance Languages and Literatures)

Chloe Koulefanou, *You're Not a Country, Togo: Political Action, Agency, and Trauma in the Togolese Diaspora* (Social Studies)

Ethnographic and archival research for this thesis will take place primarily in Lomé, Togo as an important site for understanding neocolonialism, migration, and political trauma in contexts of postcolonial citizenship and military dictatorship.

Mentor: Grace Ngugi (African and African American Studies & History)

Jeromel Lara, *Overseas Filipina Domestic Workers and the Rituals of Making a Filipino Space in the Diaspora* (Anthropology and Religion)

This ethnographic study of informal spaces and networks of care in the lives of Filipina domestic workers in the Middle East will culminate in a film project to convey their stories.

Mentor: Myriam Amri (Anthropology)

Anissa Medina, *Remembering the Pueblo Revolt of 1680: A Transnational Analysis of Memory and Commemoration* (History and Literature)

This project will study the memory and commemoration of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, examining statues in New Mexico, Washington D.C., and Spain, as well as archives in Mexico.

Mentor: Yareli Castro Sevilla (American Studies)

Thuan Tran, *Black Notes on Saigon* (Social Studies)

This thesis will track the literary exchanges between African-American and Vietnamese expatriate writers in Paris from 1946-1965 and at the time of the First Indochina War (1946-1955).

Mentor: Jewel Pereyra (American Studies)

James Walkingstick, *Protecting the Water: The Social Dimensions of Environmental Conservation* (Anthropology)

This thesis will document how those who live near the Tar Creek Superfund Site relate to water, the land, each other, and their homes while navigating the impacts of water pollution.

Mentor: Diana Guo (Graduate School of Design)

EMR Thesis Prize

The Senior Thesis Prize in Ethnicity, Migration, Rights recognizes projects that contribute to current scholarly discourses about ethnicity, migration, indigeneity, race, and/or rights. EMR recognized three outstanding theses from a competitive pool of applicants.



Farah Afify '22
Winner | Radical and Muslim: Islamic Liberationist Thought in the Black Panther Party
Concentrator in Social Studies

Afify engages archival and biographical sources, along with firsthand oral histories and ethnography, to understand how Islamic thought, practice, and understandings of kinship infused East Coast Panthers’ political work in the late twentieth century. Afify demonstrates that Muslim identity and theology were inseparable from their revolutionary organizing in and against the carceral state. EMR readers lauded this “impeccably researched” thesis for its ethnographic sophistication and sensitivity and its “expertly” delivered contributions to Muslim American studies, Black studies, history, and political theory.

“It was my greatest joy to have been able to conduct this project in conversation with the Muslim Black Panthers who kindly shared their life experiences with me and trusted me to relay them ethically and accurately. I give Brother Jihad Abdulmumit, Brother Masai Ehehosi, and Brother Jalil Muntaqim my sincerest gratitude for both their willingness to be interviewed and the immense care they showed me as a young Muslim who is growing and learning in her scholarship and her faith.” - Farah Afify



Matteo Wong '22
Winner | Up the Stairs to the Basement Workshop: Sustaining Art, Activism, and an Asian American Community in New York City, 1970-86
Concentrator in History and Literature

Wong documents the life of The Basement Workshop, a New York City Asian American arts and political organization, situating the Basement in wider views of Asian American history, theory, and activist coalition. This thesis depicts the Basement’s artistic initiatives and organizational experiments, along with the generative and contentious forms of relationality that pervaded its work. EMR readers commended Wong’s “creative and original” approach, calling it “a brilliantly written thesis” that is “easily graduate-level work.”

“I started researching the Basement Workshop out of a desire to study the Asian American movement; most histories of the period focus on the West Coast, and I wanted to study the movement in New York City, where I am from. I’m especially proud of all the oral history interviews I did for this project, and I tried to let my interviewees’ voices shine in the written product. The understanding of Asian America as a label for a messy, potentially generative process that I develop is something that I imagine will inform my thinking for years to come.” - Matteo Wong

Kelsey Chen '22
Honorable Mention | Things Adrift: A Vital Materialist Account of Trinh Mai’s Bone of My Bone as Feminist Refuge-Making Craft
Concentrator in Social Studies; History of Art & Architecture

Chen engages Vietnamese American artist Trinh Mai’s driftwood project in a highly original theoretical mode that probes relations between human and non-human materiality. An EMR reader praised this thesis for opening “a new

way to approach diasporic artists’ practice. It shows how we may analyze and understand issues relating to displacement, trauma, migration, and belonging without taking a crudely reductive stance informed only by changing politics.”

“Things Adrift: A Vital Materialist Account of Trinh Mai’s Sculpture as Feminist Refuge-Making Craft, aims to take the philosophy of new materialisms and object-oriented ontology to develop an applied method for studying the auratic power of art objects outside of human interpretation and experience of them. This approach is an attempt to develop an empirical logic to explain how things are powerful and expressive for reasons beyond how they might become meaningful to human viewers, expanding upon current art historical understandings of “meaning as produced” by human-art encounter. I undertook this project because I was truly moved and overcome when witnessing Mai’s work, Bone of My Bone, and because I found current scholarly tactics for discussing art and the power of art objects to be entirely insufficient to describe what I was feeling. hold an unspeakable gratitude towards this spectacular woman and her work.”
- Kelsey Chen



Courtney DeLong '22
Honorable Mention | Nourishing Community: Culinary Traditions’ Role in Shaping Localized Black Identities in St. James Parish, Louisiana
Concentrator in History; Folklore & Mythology

DeLong gives a simultaneously deep and broad account of Black community foodways and food practices in St. James Parish, Louisiana from the 19th to 21st centuries. This thesis artfully narrates the trajectories that connect histories of colonization and enslavement to present-day environmental injustice. EMR readers celebrated DeLong’s empathy and criticality in equal measure and found that “elegant moves between systemic problems (colonialism; racial capitalism) and the deeply personal (resident’s family narratives and grassroots organizing) make this thesis a resounding success.”

“I could not have written this thesis without the time, trust, and wisdom of Garry Winchester, Milton, Sharon Lavigne, and Stephanie Cooper. My collaborators’ memories illustrated both the petrochemical industry’s effects on and the deep meanings behind Black foodways in St. James Parish. Without their knowledge, this project would have simply been impossible.” - Courtney DeLong



Noah Secondo '22
Honorable Mention | Just Sojourners? Traveling Artists, Civil Rights Activism, and U.S. National Security
Concentrator in History; Romance Languages and Literatures

Secondo traces the transnational travels, creative cultural work, and political interventions of Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and Lenny Bruce. EMR readers found that these actors’ commitments to engaging “anti-colonialism, international conflicts, and social taboos, always in solidarity with those who suffered injustices” have great relevance for the present as well as the times in which they lived. They commended the thesis for its “impressive and poetic assemblage of sources” which ultimately make “an original and urgent contribution to the study of transnational solidarities and the Long Civil Rights Movement.”

“Too often, we underestimate the power of artists to effect political change. By following a poet, a singer, and a comedian around the world, this thesis shows how art of all kinds has influenced social movements and the governments that attempt to control them.” - Noah Secondo



PEOPLE OF EMR

EMR Faculty Advisory Committee for the 2021-2022 academic year: Robin Kelsey (Dean), Raquel Vega-Durán (Chair), Eram Alam (History of Science), Lowell Brower (Folklore & Mythology), Glenda Carpio (African and African American Studies/AAAS; English), Bruno Carvalho (Romance Languages and Literatures/RLL; AAAS), Philip Deloria (History), Sarah Dryden-Peterson (Graduate School of Education), Lauren Kaminsky (History and Literature), Jinah Kim (History of Art and Architecture), Ju Yon Kim (English), Matthew Liebmann (Anthropology), Caroline Light (Women, Gender, and Sexuality/WGS), María Luisa Parra-Velasco (RLL), Malavika Reddy (Anthropology), Robert F. Reid-Pharr (WGS; AAAS), Philip Torrey (Law School).

On leave: Vijay Iyer (Music), Mayra Rivera (Divinity School).

EMR Administration

Raquel Vega-Durán, Faculty Chair
Eleanor Craig, Administrative and Program Director; Lecturer
Andrea Davies, Administrative Coordinator
Eiji Miura, Program and Communications Assistant

Contact us: emr@fas.harvard.edu

Facebook: [Ethnicity, Migration, Rights at Harvard University](#)

Instagram: [@emr_harvard](#)

