

EMR ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

THE COMMITTEE ON ETHNICITY, MIGRATION, RIGHTS
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCES, HARVARD UNIVERSITY



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

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As my first term as Chair of EMR concludes, I look back at the last three years and I am amazed at how much we have accomplished. During 2022-23 we have continued growing, flourishing, and advocating for EMR to become a concentration. At the Academic Fair last August, over one hundred first-year students expressed their interest in EMR; although students don’t formally declare a secondary field until their sophomore year, eighty-one of them asked to join our community by signing up for our newsletter. We are seeing more and more students coming to Harvard with a strong interest in EMR; over and over again, even in their first semester at Harvard, students ask whether they can concentrate in EMR. We finished this year with over 75 declared secondary fielders, and this number keeps rising. Even though our secondary fielders are concentrating in other departments across the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities, most of them share a wish to incorporate their EMR background into their main concentration work. Should we become a concentration, I see many of them doing a joint or a double concentration where they would integrate EMR with their other fields. Students understand that EMR – a program on global migration, ethnicity, indigeneity, and rights, housed in the Arts and Humanities – is the ideal space for new, interdisciplinary, complex, and engaged transnational narratives about the world we live in today.

The majority of the courses in the EMR course catalog originate in other departments and programs, and it is wonderful that we can count on such a large variety of perspectives. Over the last three years, however, we have also been able to increase the number of EMR-numbered courses. EMR started keeping track of enrollments in 2015, and at that point we had 37 students in our own courses. Three years later we had 155 students registered in EMR courses, and in 2022-23 the number increased to 220. Our courses have consistently been over-enrolled, and unfortunately we continue to have to turn students away – all of which speaks to the need for more courses! I am extremely happy to report that both of our non-ladder search requests were approved. We are thrilled to welcome two new faculty, Leslie Fernandez, EMR Lecturer in Asian American Studies, and Mandy Izadi, Lecturer in Native American and Indigenous Studies with a joint appointment in EMR and History & Literature. EMR’s growth has also translated into the need for new staff support, and I am delighted to welcome our new Academic Program Coordinator, Genevieve Butler, and our new Finance and Operations Coordinator, Fatimah Mateen. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof (History), Erika Lee (History), and Taeku Lee (Government); we look forward to working with them to expand and strengthen the study of ethnicity and migration at Harvard.

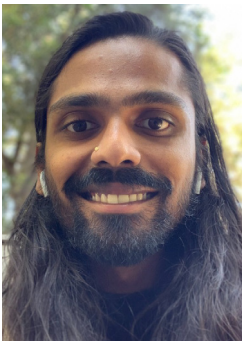
I invite you to read this report, where you can see the large variety of curricular and co-curricular programming we have implemented this year. Our emphasis continues to be the creation of spaces that foster interdisciplinary, multidimensional, and global approaches to our core fields. Examples of these are the new course EMR 156 Migrations, where twelve guest speakers (from across the FAS as well as from the Harvard professional schools, and from outside Harvard as well) demonstrated the need to approach migration from a wide variety of methodological, theoretical, historical, geographical, and cultural perspectives; the Quechua Alliance Meeting in Cambridge and the panel presented at the United Nations by Harvard Undergraduates on Indigenous Youth and World-Building; and the multi-year project of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies Working Group (AAPISWG), studying the complex relationships between Pacific Islander and Asian American histories; among many others. In addition to our courses, and extra-curricular events, this year we inaugurated our new program EMR Scholars, a series of workshops on the interconnections of our core fields,

EMR NEWS

New Faculty and Staff

During the academic year 2022-23 we ran two faculty searches and two staff searches.

We welcome professors Mandy Izadi and Leslie Fernandez. Dr. Fernandez will be EMR Lecturer in Asian American Studies, and Dr. Izadi will have a joint appointment as Lecturer in Native American and Indigenous Studies in EMR and the Committee on History and Literature.



Leslie Fernandez will be joining us from UC Riverside, where they have just completed their Ph.D. in English. Their research and teaching center on Asian and Asian American cultural production with a focus on speculative literature and media. Their methodological approaches are informed by postcolonial theory, Asian American literary theory, Asian studies, science and technology studies, post-humanist theory, feminist theory, and critical race and ethnic studies. Their interests in techno-Orientalism and Artificial Intelligence (AI) literature and media as they relate to theories of race will add important dimensions to the EMR curriculum.



Mandy Izadi received her Ph.D. in History from Oxford University, United Kingdom, where she focused on Transnational Indigenous Studies; African American History; Environmental Studies; Race, Slavery, and Global Capitalism; British, Spanish, and American Imperialism; and Modern America. She just finished her book *Born of War: Seminoles and the Making of America* (forthcoming with Yale University Press), a transnational history of the multi-ethnic Indigenous peoples known as the Seminoles. She was recently a W.E.B. DuBois Fellow at the Hutchins Center. We are excited for what her broad engagements with Global Indigenous studies, imperialism, and global capitalism will bring to EMR classrooms.

Staff members Andrea Davies and Eiji Miura departed EMR in summer of 2022 to pursue wonderful new opportunities. Over the fall semester, Soo Sheung Wong served as Interim Program Coordinator before moving on to a position in development at MIT. We uplift the brilliant ways they all supported and enhanced EMR’s operations and programs.

In fall of 2022, EMR redesigned our staff structure and introduced two full-time managerial-level positions: Our new Academic Programs Coordinator is Genevieve Butler, and Fatimah Mateen is the Finance and Operations Coordinator.



Genevieve Butler (she/her) arrived in February from the Harvard Sociology Department. She is excited to contribute her administrative experience to the coordination and expansion of EMR programing and feels honored to work in support of this community. She has an arts and education background and an ALM in History of Science from the Extension School. She spends most of her spare hours in the immigrant/migrant rights activism space and with her partner, friends and family, including a growing number of little niblings.



Fatimah Mateen (she/her) joined EMR in February of 2023. Before making the transition to EMR, she was the company manager at the American Repertory Theater, working on several Broadway-bound productions including *SIX*, *1776*, and *Life of Pi*. She has worked at theaters across the greater Boston area, including ArtsEmerson, Speakeasy Stage Company, and Boston Children’s Theater. She holds a BA in Theater Studies from Emerson College. In her free time, she enjoys snuggling her two cats, going on long walks, and handmaking ceramics.

where a small cohort of committed scholars have the opportunity for deep academic engagement with an invited speaker; this year, we expanded this program to meet the great demand. We also started the Voices of Migration reading group, where a group of students met monthly to discuss different voices and spaces that are usually absent from academic narratives of migration, including painting, sculpture, street art, photography, graphic novels, poetry, and animated film. Both programs were highly successful and will now become an integral part of EMR.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the whole EMR community. We are very grateful to the faculty who have contributed with their courses to our course catalog, as well as to all our secondary fielders, whether they have just discovered us or have been taking courses with us for several years. Special thanks to the EMR staff members – Eleanor Craig, Genevieve Butler, and Fatimah Mateen – for all their work coordinating and strengthening the many different components of our program, and for the precious advice and support they offer to both students and faculty. We also appreciate very much custodian Hilda Pineda for taking such good care of EMR spaces at 2 Arrow Street. We are truly grateful to the members of the Faculty Advisory Committee for their continued support and for being such wonderful thought partners. For their financial support and co-sponsoring invitations, as well as for their enriching curricular and intellectual collaborations, we thank the Harvard Arts Museums; the Asia Center; the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History; the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies; the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures; donors to the EMR Fund; the Elson Family Arts Initiative Funds; the Mahindra Humanities Center; the Provostial Funds for the Arts and Humanities; the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations; the Committee on Degrees in History and Literature; Harvard College Latinos in Health Careers; the Harvard University Native American Program; the Observatorio Cervantes; the Harvard College Women’s Center; South Asians for Forward-Thinking; and the Committee on Degrees in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. Finally, a special thank you to the Office of the Dean of Arts and Humanities for their ongoing support and grants that have made it possible for us to launch many of our new initiatives.

The year 2023-24 brings much exciting news. We would like to extend a warm welcome to Paulina Alberto, Professor of African and African American Studies and of History, who will join EMR and will be serving as our interim Chair for this coming academic year. We will continue our EMR Scholars program with a new cohort of students, and we will be collaborating with the American Repertory Theater to bring the puppet performance Little Amal to campus in early September. We will also be offering six new courses on Asian American and Indigenous Studies; and we will have a newly renovated, clear, and informative website.

It has truly been an honor to serve as Chair of EMR for the last three years, and I look forward to returning in fall 2024. Thank you very much for being part of this global and interdisciplinary program – I look forward to watching it grow with you over the coming years!

Sincerely,

Raquel Vega-Durán
EMR Faculty Chair

EMR Scholars

One of EMR’s strengths is that it brings together students with diverse backgrounds, interests, and disciplinary training. In the 2022-23 academic year, we continued on this initiative that kicked off in spring of 2022 with Paula Park’s workshop entitled “Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Latinx Intersections.” The goals for these workshops are to offer small cohorts of committed undergraduates an opportunity for deep academic engagement, to demonstrate the rich possibilities for dialogue across focus areas, and to showcase the interdisciplinary nature of EMR.

Each workshop was conceptually oriented around topics broadly set by EMR and specified by each seminar leader. Participants were selected through a competitive application process. During this year, we offered these four workshops:



Facilitators pictured in the order listed.

- “Diaspora and Belonging in Afro-Latinx Studies” with Kaysha Corinealdi (Emerson College)
- “Global Indigeneities and Disaster Capitalism” with Jorge Sánchez Cruz (Harvard)
- “Transnational Migrations” with Lowell Brower (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- “Ethnic and Migration Studies: Convergences and Conversations” with Barbara Sostaita (University of Illinois at Chicago)

The fall set of seminars culminated in a share-out panel at which students shared their takeaways and reflected on how what they learned in the seminars might inform future EMR curricula.

Voices of Migration Reading Group

In order to create a sense of community among the undergraduate students interested in understanding migration from an interdisciplinary perspective, EMR started *Voices of Migration*, a structured reading group where three times a semester students met with EMR Chair Raquel Vega-Durán to discuss a specific reading or works of art. The goal of this initiative was to expose students to examples of a large variety of voices and perspectives from different parts of the world that are usually absent from mainstream narratives of migration.

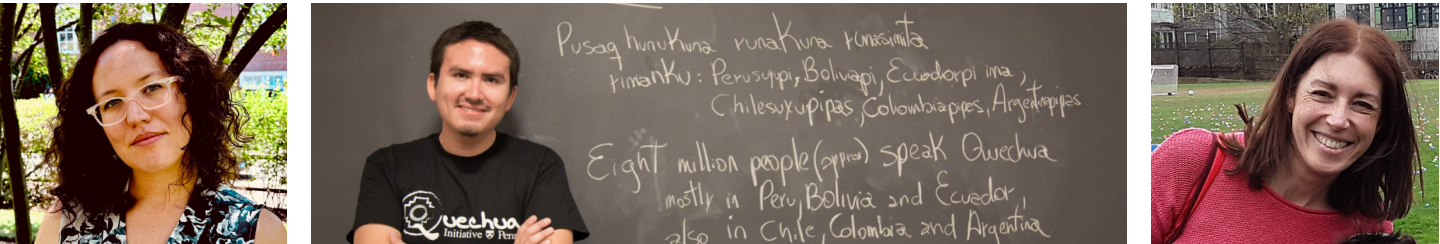
This year we focused on graphic novels, poetry, painting, documentary and animated film, photojournalism, and the politics of storytelling. The students also had the chance to meet and converse with painter Arleene Correa Valencia about “Making Visible the Invisible.”

Migration, Border, and Diaspora Studies Workshops

In dialogue with her course EMR 156 *Migrations*, EMR chair Raquel Vega-Durán organized and coordinated three in-person workshops for undergraduate students around migration, border, and diaspora. The following workshops were open to the public:

- *Migration and Poetry*, facilitated by Raquel Vega-Durán
- *Border Patrol and the Criminalization of Migration*, facilitated by photojournalist Kirsten Luce (NYTimes)
- *Migritude*, facilitated by Lowell Brower (U of Wisconsin - Madison)

Course Highlights in AY 2022-2023



In 2021 we started offering the new series of courses “Topics” to complement our already popular “Portal” courses, and to strengthen the stability of the EMR curriculum. During 2022-23 we offered Topics in Latinx Studies (EMR 1010) and Topics in Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies (EMR 1020) for the second time each. These introductory courses allow for students unfamiliar with ethnic studies to find welcoming, accessible entry points to new areas of study.

Eleanor Craig (above left) taught *Memory and Diaspora* (EMR 152), a transdisciplinary course that culminated in multimedia storytelling projects. Students’ creative processes were supported by theater artist and writer Kayhan Irani and the Bok Center for Teaching and Learning.



End of semester showcase of final multimedia projects for EMR 152, *Memory and Diaspora*, Fall 2022.

Américo Mendoza-Mori, (top center) taught *Quechua, Indigenous Language Revitalization and Global Indigeneity* (EMR 151), an interdisciplinary seminar that explored the relevance and global impact of Indigenous cultures and languages. In addition to readings, final projects, and class discussions, students were able to engage with different scholars, language activists, and artists; guest-speakers included Diego Tituaña (Indigenous diplomat, formerly UN’s Ecuador mission), Mneesha Gellman (scholar on Political Sciences and Indigenous Language Policies), Renzo Aroni (Quechua scholar), Irma Álvarez-Ccoscco (Quechua poet), and Nely Huayta (Quechua journalist). *The Crimson* and DRCLAS’ *ReVista* reported on some of the course activities.

Raquel Vega-Durán (top right) piloted *Migrations* (EMR 156), which drew guest speakers from twelve departments across and beyond Harvard University to demonstrate the vast interdisciplinarity of Migration and Border Studies. The twelve lectures provided a window into particular disciplines and perspectives, and they were offered by the following faculty, artists, and activists: Eram Alam (History of Science, Harvard U), Sarah Dryden-Peterson (Harvard Graduate School of Education), Philip Torrey (Harvard Law School), Ana Teresa Fernández (Performance Artist), Arleene Correa Valencia (Community-Oriented Artist), Ronald Rael (Architecture and Design, UC Berkeley), Glenda Carpio (English, Harvard U), Valeria Luiselli (English, Harvard U), Hélène Benveniste (Harvard University Center for the Environment and HKS), Kirsten Luce (Photojournalist, NYTimes), Lowell Brower (Folklore, U Wisconsin-Madison), and Jacqueline Bhabha (FXB Center Director of Research and HKS.)

During 2022-23, we welcomed many guest speakers to our courses: Dell M. Hamilton (Hutchins Center), Ashlie Sandoval (Derek Bok Center), Diego Tituaña (Kichwa Indigenous diplomat to the Ecuadorian Foreign Service), Stephen Berrey (University of Michigan), Katelina (Kathleen) Eccleston (Reggaeton Con La Gata), and Kayhan Irani (Artivista Productions).



Diego Tituaña, Kichwa Indigenous diplomat to the Ecuadorian Foreign Service, visiting EMR 151, *Global Quechua*, Fall 2022.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Student Advisory Council (SAC)

SAC’s monthly lunch meetings have held an important space for student-led programing, brainstorming, and Working Group event planning this year.



Community Building/EMR Internship

Our EMR Intern **Renee Susanto** had a busy year creating social media content, supporting working group activities, and offering myriad forms of assistance to program communications and events. She also organized several community-building events within EMR and in partnership with student-serving offices across the college. Renee’s activities and collaborations on behalf of EMR included two successful “Long Day Against Procrastination” events held during Fall and Spring Reading Periods, a lecture and workshop by artist Eunsoo Jung (AKA @koreangry), and an end-of-year “Spring Fling” social event held on the Charles River Esplanade.

Working Group Highlights

Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies Working Group (AAPISWG)

The AAPISWG has been involved in a multi-year project focused on the complex relationships between Pacific Islander and Asian American histories, lives, and studies. The main events in this series were: “Navigating Pacific Islands Studies in ‘AAPI’: From the Academic to the Personal” with Rebecca Hogue (History and Literature/Harvard), Spring semester “Welcome Back” event featuring a discussion with Nitasha Sharma (Northwestern University), “AAPI Snack and Chat” with Leanne Day (University of Hawai’i Hilo), facilitated by Rebecca Hogue, and a book talk for *Archipelago of Resettlement: Vietnamese Refugee Settlers and Decolonization Across Guam and Israel-Palestine* with Evyn Lê Espiritu Ghandi (University of California, Los Angeles).



Rebecca Hogue, Harvard History & Literature, and Leanne Day, (University of Hawai’i Hilo), left; Evyn Lê Espiritu Ghandi (UCLA), right.

AAPISWG Coordinators **Seokweon Jeon** and **Nathan Samayo** are departing this year for traveling dissertation research and doctoral studies at Princeton University, respectively. We celebrate their fantastic efforts and the groundwork they have laid for ongoing working group engagement with these important topics.

Dissertation Working Group (DWG)

Ten doctoral students from American Studies, Anthropology, the Graduate School of Education, History, Romance Languages and Literatures, and Study of Religion participated in this year’s DWG. The cohort met biweekly over Zoom to discuss pre-circulated works in progress, providing constructive feedback and moral support across time zones and geographical distances. The DWG is selected every summer through an application process open to any Harvard doctoral student researching EMR-aligned topics.

Latinx Studies Working Group (LSWG)

This year’s LSWG events included several gatherings that continued the group’s dedicated focus to Afro-Latinx scholarship and politics, with particular attention to Indigeneity, migration, and diaspora. These activities included a virtual reading group on Paul Joseph López’s essay, “Garifunizando Ambas Américas”; a reception at Alan Pelaez Lopez’s N[eg]ation exhibit (organized by Tommy Connors from History and Literature); and co-sponsorship with local organization Encuentro Diaspora of a conversation entitled Black Women Building Bridges, part of a series entitled “Let’s Walk Together, Caminemos Juntos, Ann Mache Ansanm, Vamos a Caminhar Juntos.” We are grateful to coordinators **Maya Doig-Acuña** and **Massiel Torres** for their three years of dedicated leadership, wish them well as they delve into intensive dissertation research, and look forward to building on their tremendous work.



Jorge Sánchez Cruz, Harvard RLL, November 2022, left; Martha Cesena, HMS, November 2022, center; Andrea Garza, RLL, March 2023, right.

The Harvard Latinx Studies Seminar Series (HALATSS), initiated by LSWG’s faculty advisor Américo Mendoza-Mori, invites Harvard students and faculty to showcase their research and dialogue with a transdisciplinary scholarly community. This year’s presentations were: “Undocumentedness: Triangulating Latinx Studies and Latin American Studies” with Jorge Sánchez Cruz (Romance Languages and Literatures); “Persistence in Hope: the plight of minority students when attending college and studying health careers” with Martha Cesena (Harvard Medical School, Boston Children’s Hospital); and “Absurdity and Discourse: Politics in Mexico” with Andrea Garza (Romance Languages and Literatures).

Muslim American Studies Working Group (MASWG)

This year’s focus for MASWG was on delineating Muslim American Studies as a field, for Harvard students and beyond. MASWG’s dynamic kickoff event included a brainstorm activity about the meaning of Muslim American Studies. The group hosted a panel in November entitled “How to Research in Muslim American Studies” that featured Asif Majid (University of Connecticut) and Abtsam Saleh (Religion, Harvard). The group’s final program of the year was an EMR Iftar for Ramadan, which invited anyone connected to the working group to gather in community. We are thrilled that Coordinators **Sameer Khan** and **Afiya Rahman** will continue their creative and committed leadership of MASWG in AY 2023-2024.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

EMR was pleased and honored to support the following events, chronologically listed below, in a co-sponsorship role. EMR had a leadership role in planning and delivering the events displayed in bold font.



***Undocumentedness: Triangulating Latinx Studies and Latin American Studies* with Harvard Prof. Jorge Sánchez Cruz. A presentation of EMR’s Latinx Studies Working Group (LSWG) and Harvard Latinx Seminar Series (HALATSS), co-sponsored by Observatorio Cervantes at Harvard University, and the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations.**

***Persistence in Hope: the Plight of Minority Students When Attending College and Studying Health Careers* with Dr. Martha Cesena (Harvard Medical School and Boston Children’s Hospital). A presentation of EMR’s Latinx Studies Working Group (LSWG) and Harvard Latinx Seminar Series (HALATSS), co-sponsored by Observatorio Cervantes at Harvard University, the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations, and Harvard College Latinos in Health Careers.**

***Navigating Pacific Islands Studies in ‘AAPI’: From the Academic to the Personal*, teach-in a group discussion with Rebecca Hogue from Harvard History & Literature. A presentation of EMR’s Asian American and Pacific Islander Working Group (AAPIWG).**

All About Love, a Valentine’s themed event named after and centered on of bell hooks’ acclaimed work. Led by Harvard College Women’s Center (HCWC), and Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations.

Relevance on Indigeneity, a discussion including Selene Manga, Takemi Fellow in International Health at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Emil’ Keme, Humanities Fellow in Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University; Julie Fiveash, Librarian for American Indigenous Studies at Tozzer Library, Harvard University; Sharoll Fernández Siñani, Artist, Member of the Jichha Collective and Master’s student at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education; moderated by EMR’s Américo Mendoza-Mori. Led by David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS) and Harvard University Native American Program (HUNAP).

Imaging Desire and Reality, a lecture by photographer Pao Houa Her. Led by Harvard Art Museums (HAMS).

Quechua and Andean Cosmogony, Healthcare, and Spirituality, a discussion with Nicolas Paucar Calcina and EMR’s Américo Mendoza-Mori. Led by Harvard University Native American Program (HUNAP) and the Quechua Initiative for Global Indigeneity.

2023 Peggy Schmertzler Lecture, featuring Eunsoo Jung (@Koreangry), and artist’s workshop. EMR co-sponsored with the Harvard College Women’s Center. (HCWC).

***Absurdity and Discourse: Politics in Mexico*, a talk by Andrea Garza. A presentation of EMR’s Latinx Studies Working Group (LSWG) and Harvard Latinx Seminar Series (HALATSS), co-sponsored by Observatorio Cervantes at Harvard University.**

***AAPI Snack and Chat* with Leanne Day (University of Hawai’i at Hilo) and Rebecca Hogue (Harvard History & Literature).**

Sueño en Otro Idioma/I Dream in Another Language, a screening and discussion led by the Mahindra Humanities Center and the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS).

***Archipelago of Resettlement: Vietnamese Refugee Settlers and Decolonization across Guam and Israel-Palestine*, book talk with author Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi (UCLA). A presentation of EMR’s Asian American and Pacific Islander Working Group (AAPIWG), co-sponsored by the Harvard Asia Center.**

Panel on Kurdish Women: The Voice Disrupting Political Corruption in the Middle East, led by Harvard undergraduate student organizer Dalal Hassane.

Quechua Alliance 7th Annual Meeting, brought to Harvard and coordinated by EMR’s Américo Mendoza-Mori, with Provostial funding and support by the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS).

***Ramadan Iftar*, hosted by the Muslim American Studies Working Group (MASWG).**

***Spring Fling on the Esplanade*. Co-sponsored by the Harvard College Women’s Center, (HCWC), the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations, and Latinas Unidas.**

Dalit Feminist Authorship, a book talk and panel discussion with Grace Banu, Thenmozhi Soundararajan, and Yashica Dutt, led by South Asians for Forward-Thinking Advocacy and Research (SAFAR).

***Long Day Against Procrastination*, an end-of-term social study event that took place in Fall 2022 and Spring 2023, organized by EMR Intern Renee Susanto.**

***EMR End of Year Celebration + Thesis Show*, a presentation of 2022 EMR Summer Thesis Research Grant winners, 2023 EMR Thesis Prize winners, and other graduating seniors’ thesis projects.**

EMR THESIS PRIZE WINNERS

The Senior Thesis Prize in Ethnicity, Migration, Rights recognizes projects that contribute to current scholarly discourses about ethnicity, migration, indigeneity, race, and or/rights.

Marissa Joseph

Thesis Prize



Haitianas: Uncovering Migration, Memory, and (M)Others in Cuba’s Post-Revolutionary National Identity

Marissa Joseph ’23, studies History and Literature with a focus field in Ethnic Studies. A child of Haitian immigrants, her work explores transnational histories of Haitian women and their role in shaping the construction of race in the Caribbean. While at Harvard, Marissa pursued her research interests as a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Research Fellow.

Reflections from Marissa: *This year, I embarked on a journey to uncover the inextricable history that binds Haiti and Cuba, placing the women who create and sustain our revolutionary cultures and livelihoods at the center of my investigation. Haitianas, Cuban women of Haitian descent, shared their memories of madres, tias, y esposas and led me to the rich story of resilience and diasporic community building that marks the Haitian presence in Cuba. My thesis was born from my never-ending dedication to providing Haitian women their rightful place in our history books because their influence in this world knows zero bounds. It transcends borders, spans across generations, and speaks many languages. Within their leadership and legacies, I believe we can find the pathway to alternative world-making, liberatory futures, and freedom — if we have the courage to seek it.*

James Walkingstick

Honorable Mention



Back to Water: Reclaiming the Future of the Tar Creek Superfund Site

James Walkingstick ’23, is a Harvard College graduate from the Department of Anthropology, where he submitted his senior thesis “Back to Water: Reclaiming the Future of the Tar Creek Superfund Site.” Walkingstick’s research centers wetland structures, indigenous frameworks, grassroots efforts and flood retention models to save communities from heavy metal and nitrate pollution. His thesis analyzes sites ranging from urban London to rural Nevada, from the coasts of Hawaii to the plains of Oklahoma, all impacted by industrial development and environmental degradation. Walkingstick is the recipient of the Sally Falk Moore Prize in Public Service, the United Nations Incomindios Youth Scholarship, and is an executive board member of Local Environmental Action Demanded Inc. He plans to continue the fight to bring clean air, land and water to his home in Northeast Oklahoma.

Reflections from James: *I think that we always look back to where we grew up, where we took our first few steps and where we learned to talk. For me, Grand Lake is not just the focus of my research and it most certainly is not just an environmental disaster; it is my home. During my first few years at Harvard, I began realizing just how extreme the lead pollution and flooding had become in Oklahoma, and upon my return in 2019, I was caught in the floodwaters and nearly stranded in 4 feet of water. I knew there had to be a way to stop my home, my friends and my family from being flooded with lead-filled water. This is when I began my work with LEAD Agency Inc. to educate community members and mitigate lead-poisoning risks through activism. This volunteering evolved into my academic passion that fueled my thesis: I created a new Land Use Plan for the Quapaw Nation to clean up the Tar Creek Superfund Site using renewable energy, wetland restoration and bison herd development; I joined the Harvard Graduate School of Design as a guest critic, creating sustainable landscape models to channel contaminated flood waters; I conducted research with Waterkeepers in London, Miami and Hawai’i to propose solutions to water pollution in their respective communities; I joined the Steering Committee of the Western Mining Action Network to advocate for communities in rural Nevada fighting lithium mining in the wake of the Inflation Reduction Act. In all, my home in Northeast Oklahoma and my family’s wellbeing is what motivated my academic journey and this thesis, and I owe them the world for it.*

SUMMER THESIS RESEARCH GRANT WINNERS

Summer thesis research grants are generously supported by donors to the EMR Fund and the Observatorio Cervantes at Harvard University. We are enormously grateful to those who make these opportunities possible. To follow are some words from this year’s EMR Summer Thesis Research Grant Winners about their projects:



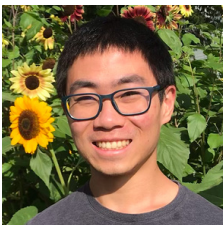
Hannah Bottarel “My thesis, 9-year-olds on Birth Control:The Role of Gender in Migrant Journeys through Mexico was inspired by my experiences working at the U.S. southern border in Texas. Perhaps the most harrowing stories I heard were those of migrant women and children. Parents described putting girls as young as 9-years-old on birth control as they feared getting pregnant could prove an inevitable part of their daughters’ journeys to the states. To shed light on this under researched topic and give voice to individual migrant women, I plan to conduct ethnographic research in this community as well as at migrant shelters in Mexico.”



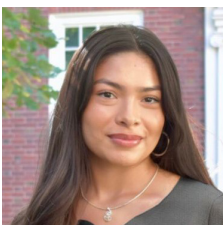
Ames Chalán “I am conducting research for my senior thesis, tentatively titled: Indigenous Futurisms in the Context of De(coloniality): Kichwa Youth and Regenerations of Indigeneity. My interests in transnational indigeneity, indigenous youth well-being, and cultural reclamation are largely informed by my lived experiences as a Kichwa Saraguro warmi. As a tribal leader and youth organizer, I am constantly inspired by the innovative ways that indigenous youth express identity, resistance, and sovereignty in the context of a neoliberal country with deeply entrenched colonial legacies. Through inter-generational ethnographic and archival research in multiple communities in the Andes, I will theorize with Kichwa youth as we remember, reclaim, and regenerate a contemporary Kichwa cosmovision.”



Daniel Foster “My project explores why African American Lukumi/Santería practitioners choose to practice their religion and how these practitioners build community through religion as cultural newcomers. My interest in this topic lies in my desire to learn more about the various reasons why people across the African Diaspora are adopting different religious practices of African origin. Through ethnographic research, I aim to investigate how African American practitioners’ participation in Lukumi/Santería may be tied to a goal of decolonization. I would also like to learn about any tensions or difficulties that African American practitioners may face as members of an Afro-Cuban religion.”



Justin Hu “Scholarship on the anticolonial thinker Aimé Césaire has privileged the cosmopolitan intellectual ecosystem of Paris as the central milieu that generated Césaire’s political and literary visions, and has often marginalized the role Césaire’s secondary education played in cultivating his thought. In reality, Césaire’s high school, the Lycée Schoelcher, was a prominent site in the Martinican radical tradition, educating the postcolonial luminaries Frantz Fanon and Édouard Glissant. Titled A Caribbean Undercommons: Studying with Aimé Césaire, my thesis explores the Lycée Schoelcher as a formative environment that shaped and radicalized Césaire’s worldviews.”



Gloria Maldonado “By engaging in conversations with my grandmother, I gained invaluable insights into the history of her hometown and community situated on the lakeside of Lake Chapala in Mexico. Our discussions were wide-ranging, covering topics such as her family lineage, the communal legacies of colonial resistance, and the paramount significance of land, tradition, and cultural preservation to the Coca indigenous community. My aspiration through the EMR grant is to amplify the visibility of the community’s histories, specifically by shedding light on the significance of local knowledge as a vital source of strength and preservation. This initiative is particularly critical in view of the current challenges that the Coca communities encounter regarding land preservation.”

Alaha Nasari “In light of the 2021 Taliban offensive and subsequent transition to Taliban rule, physicians and other healthcare workers in Afghanistan have found themselves trapped in a moral battleground. My project will focus on the experiences of Afghan doctors in the past two years, exploring how their subjugation under the Taliban has complicated their ethical duty to provide care and treatment to those in need, a concept defined as medical neutrality. I aim to answer the following question: how does the current state of civil and political turmoil under the Taliban regime impact Afghan doctors’ commitment to professional ethics and medical neutrality? I intend to expand the literature regarding the experiences of doctors operating in conflict zones, specifically Afghanistan, and contribute to a deeper understanding of the politicization of medical ethics under oppressive regimes.”

Afiya Rahman “My name is Afiya, and I am a joint concentrator in Social Studies and South Asian Studies. I was born in Bangladesh and my parents and I immigrated to the U.S. when I was one. My senior thesis will study first generation Bangladeshi immigrants and the intersections of labor, racialization, and solidarity. My personal background has shaped these interests in working class communities and Bangladeshi immigrants. Through ethnographic fieldwork and interviews in a Bangladeshi enclave in New York City, I hope to investigate these networks and communities that have been built in the face of hypervisibility and invisibility.”

Emily Ramirez “My grandmother lives in the coastal region of Oaxaca and speaks both Spanish and Chatino, a language indigenous to the area. However, given the stigma surrounding the language, she decided not to teach it to her children, including my mother. While Oaxaca is home to many rich indigenous traditions, there is still a very prevalent stigma against indigenous people and their language. In this project, I will interview Chatino scholars and schoolteachers to examine the social structures and cultural factors that inhibit the use and spread of the language, especially among young children.”

Mireya Sánchez-Maes “New Mexico has experienced numerous periods of Indigenous, Spanish, and Mexican rule. This long history of rapid shifts in control has contributed to strong senses of regional identity, which has often usurped senses of national belonging. If one belongs to a territory that was once Latin America, are they latino? How does the legacy of Spanish colonization affect mestizo Chicano individuals in the modern day? I hope to explore these questions by writing a play set in New Mexico inspired by my own experiences growing up Chicana in the U.S. borderlands.”

Kari Traylor “Through her project “The Black Aquatic: Water as a Site of Refuge and Alienation in Histories of Blackness,” Kari seeks to explore water’s role in shaping Black identity and as a conduit of Black meaning. This project locates water within important historical moments of Black struggle and theorizes how this liquid matter acts as an agent of both resistance and violence. She intends to explore the relationship between water and Blackness in the context of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, studying water’s role in helping people escape slavery while also investigating how it was used to keep people in bondage.”

Eleanor Wikstrom “Upon entering Harvard in Fall 2020, I found myself captivated by a seemingly simple question: Why was Tagalog—the dominant vernacular in the Philippines, the native tongue of my mother’s family, and the fourth-most spoken primary language in the U.S.—not taught at the oldest and richest institution in the country? Since then, I’ve worked to uncover Harvard’s historical role in the U.S. colonial education system in the Philippines and to advocate for Tagalog courses at the College, ultimately securing funding for a preceptor position in Spring 2023. This summer, I will further my exploration of this topic by conducting archival research in Manila and Washington, DC, focusing in particular on how the design, implementation, and uptake of English-only instruction in the Philippines during the early 20th century informed the project of U.S. empire and the creation of colonial subjects at the end of Spanish rule and the birth of global capitalism.”



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We congratulate all our students on a great 2022-2023 Academic Year!



EMR Thesis Showcase and End of Year Celebration, May 2023. Pictured from left to right: Janna Ramadan, Adrian Hackney, Marissa Joseph, Jeromel Dela Rosa Lara, Anissa Medina, Elyse Pham, Sajen Plevyak, and James Walkingstick.

