

# La Compañera



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## *Jack Bredar: A Year Away*

The Latin American Studies program is happy to welcome five new majors. I had the opportunity to interview recently one of these students, Jack Bredar, to learn more about him and his interests in Latin America.

Jack is from Denver, Colorado and in the last couple of years Jack has gained an appreciation for Latin America. He enjoyed Spanish classes throughout middle school and high school, however. To Jack, the grammar and the writing always came easily, but he struggled to sustain a full conversation with native speakers. During his senior year, Jack wanted to take a gap year, but didn't have a specific place in mind. After research through various programs, he decided that he would take a gap year and spend it in Paraguay. He saw it as a perfect opportunity to try something new and perfect his Spanish.

After graduating high school, Jack left the states and headed for Asunción. He lived with a family made up of two parents and three children of roughly the same age as him. In the first couple of months, it took him awhile to get adjusted to speaking the language full time. During his time, he worked at a day care with three to five year-olds. This allowed him to become fluent in Spanish because he was communicating on a daily basis. He wanted to take advantage of full immersion aspect of the program by talking as much as possible the students, co-workers, and natives.

During his time in Paraguay, he was able to travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina and backpack in Chile. He backpacked at the Parque Nacional Torres del Paine with a diverse group of people. For Jack, the place had tourist from Europe, and he was taken away with the scenery. It was different from the rest of the places he had visited: "bizarre environment, not high altitude, there were peaks, glacier, just a bizarre environment, but it was amazing." Coming back to America after nearly a year's absence, he experienced culture shock because "one gains an appreciation for the style of living...here in America. I wouldn't consider Asunción a third world country, but things are a bit simpler here in America." Jack had a greater appreciation for the simple things, like sidewalks and public bathrooms



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Once at Carleton, Jack started taking a variety of courses, so his gap year experiences began to take a backseat to his academics. He was on track to major in American studies, but he had a change of heart after taking classes in the Spanish Department. After several conversations with Silvia López, he settled on becoming a Latin American Studies major because it falls in line with the work he has been for the last couple of years. If you would like to know more about his time in Paraguay, Jack created a blog: (<http://www.jackinparaguay.blogspot.com/>)

## *Edible Insects and Dirt*

Every year the Latin American Studies faculty host an end of year celebration to bring current students and younger students with an interest in the region together in an informal, social setting. This year **Constanza Ocampo-Raeder** of the Sociology/Anthropology department, organized the celebration. She brought in a collection of edible insects for students, staff, and faculty to enjoy in three different forms. The grasshoppers were offered as powders, sauces, and in their natural form, and they were enjoyed with fruit or chips. The event was a great social where everybody tried a new cuisine and met new people.





## Fall Term Course Offerings

**LTAM 100: *The Politics of Memory in Latin American Literature*:** We will explore the ethics and politics of memory and trauma in societies previously torn asunder by civil wars and dictatorships. The texts and films assigned will be studies of how subjective and collective memories are negotiated both through fictional and testimonial narratives. Our focus will be primarily on Argentina, Chile, Guatemala and El Salvador but we will also read some Holocaust literature to compare how this subject has been represented in another tradition. The primary question we will explore is: how does a work of art adequately represent the horror without aestheticizing the experience?

**Held for Class of 2019. Y.Perez: MWF 5a. 6credits**

**ECON 240: *Microeconomics of Development*:** This course explores household behavior in developing countries. We will cover areas including fertility decisions, health and mortality, investment in education, the intra-household allocation of resources, household structure, and the marriage market. We will also look at the characteristics of land, labor, and credit markets, particularly technology adoption; land tenure and tenancy arrangements; the role of agrarian institutions in the development process; and the impacts of alternative politics and strategies in developing countries. The course complements Economics 241. *Prerequisite:* Economics 110 and 111. **F.Bhuiyan: MWF 3a. 6credits**

**HIST 100.06: *U.S-Latin American Relations: A View from the South*:** "Colossus of the North" or "Good Neighbor?" While many of its citizens believe the United States wields a benign or positive effect on the world, the intent and consequences of its actions in Latin American history paints a decidedly more mixed picture. This course explores the history of hemispheric relations in the Americas with an emphasis on the twentieth century and the Cold War era. National case studies will be used to highlight key political, economic, and social developments. Latin American critiques of U.S. involvement in the region will also be examined. **Held for Class of 2019. A.Fisher: MWF 3a. 6credits**

**SOAN 203: *Anthropology of Good Intentions*:** Is the environmental movement making progress? Do responsible products actually help local populations? Is international AID alleviating poverty and fostering development? Today there are thousands of programs with sustainable development goals yet their effectiveness is often contested at the local level. This course explores the impacts of sustainable development, conservation, and AID programs to look beyond the good intentions of those that implement them. In doing so we hope to uncover common pitfalls behind good intentions and the need for sound social analysis that recognizes, examines, and evaluates the role of cultural complexity found in populations targeted by these programs. *Prerequisite:* The department strongly recommends that 110 or 111 be taken prior to enrolling in courses numbered 200 or above. **C.Ocampo-Raeder: TTH 2/3c. 6credits**

**SOAN 333: *Environmental Anthropology*:** Can we learn to use resources sustainably? Are there people in the world that know how to manage their environment appropriately? What are the causes behind environmental degradation? These questions are commonly asked in public and academic forums but what discussions often overlook is the fact that these are fundamentally social questions and thus social analysis is needed to understand them fully. This course aims at exploring key issues of human/nature interactions by using anthropological critiques and frameworks of analysis to show how culture is a critical variable to understanding these interactions in all their complexity. *Prerequisite:* The department strongly recommends that 110 or 111 be taken prior to enrolling in courses numbered 200 or above. **C.Ocampo-Raeder: TTH 4/5c. 6credits**

**SPAN 220: *Magical Realism in Latin American Narrative*:** Is it real? A concern with the interplay between reality and fiction rests at the heart of Magical Realism--a mode of discourse and a perspective on the problem of representation that informs a good many of the best known works in Latin American literature. This course will examine works in translation by authors such as Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel. We'll close the course with a nod to those authors who reject Magical Realism as the primary mode of fiction in Latin American prose. **In Translation. B.Boling: MWF 2a. 6credits**

**SPAN 277: *The Poem as Artifact: Art and Work in Contemporary Spanish American Poetry*:** Poetry will be studied as an activity that shares a common ground with other social practices. In particular, we will examine particular moments and cases of Latin American literature in which the poem (the making of poetry and the form of the text) has been conceived in its connection with work, that is, with the process of transformation of materiality into specific "objects," involving a necessary social use of time and space. We will explore this topic starting with Modernismo and, after covering the Vanguardias, will get to some key developments from the 1960s to present. *Prerequisites:* Spanish 204 or equivalent. **J. Cerna-Bazán: MWF 3a. 6credits**

# *Latin American Studies Concentrator*

## *Dan Bollinger*

Dan is from the Baltimore area. He is interested in Latin America because his mother is half- Peruvian. He was raised in the United States, so he has never had the chance to meet the other side of the family. Growing up, Dan didn't learn Spanish in his home, so he felt he missed an important part of his family history.



Upon his arrival to Carleton, Dan took Spanish 101 with Yansi Pérez, which he described as terrifying because of the full immersion aspect of the course. From these courses, he developed a strong love for the Spanish language: "it is hard for me to put into terms how I feel about Spanish, but it feels like the words just taste better". Through these courses, Dan nurtured a stronger appreciation for his roots.

During winter term of his sophomore year, Dan joined Jay Levi on his off-campus studies program to Guatemala and Chiapas. He went on the program after finishing the Spanish language sequence, so he put all of his knowledge to work when he was in Guatemala. "It was a great experience to talk to the people and perfect my speaking skills. I got to live with a host family, which is great because I lived with kids my own

age, and they help you perfect your broken Spanish".

For his research project, Dan interviewed the locals and doctors to see how their religion was used to live a healthy lifestyle. "Through my research, I went to Chiapas where everything was amazing, especially the food Latin America is a region made up of a number of diverse nations. Here in America we are suppose to be a melting pot, but you see exactly the opposite when you go to places like Chiapas and Guatemala. This is one of the main reason I was attracted to Latin America." In America, the melting pot notion is to get people to identify to one single culture; however, Dan found that in Chiapas and Guatemala all the people have a strong pride for their culture, and it is impossible to be characterize a region to a single culture.

Dan and his group had the opportunity to spend some time with Zapatistas in Chiapas. They were a welcoming people, and they were able to exchange stories and music. Dan played an acoustic version of the hip-hop song "Hey Ya" by Outkast, which was embarrassing for him because he was the only one singing. "It was bizarre and cool because they were incredibly accepting of us". Dan feels "these experiences have been rewarding because you get to read about [the Zapatistas] and learn about [the Zapatistas], but there is nothing like experiencing it first-hand. Also, it was interesting to get to meet them at a personal level, which puts everything in perspective".

Throughout the whole interview, Dan expressed a strong passion for Latin America. "I was in Silvia Lopez's Issues in Latin America course. She is an amazing professor, she is tough, but she cares. She's just the coolest person ever. Latin America Studies is so amazing and interesting because it is a diverse field. It includes economics, sociology, anthropology, history, and politics. After Guatemala and this course I knew I wanted to concentrate in Latin America studies."