

La Compañera



February 2, 2016
Genesis Rojas '19, Writer

Joshua Reason Latin American Major '17

Joshua Reason is a Junior Latin American Studies major. He took a gap year in order to figure out what he wanted to study before entering College. The following is an interview on why he decided to major in Latin American studies.

Q: What were the first Latin American Courses you took here at Carleton?

A: Technically the first Latin American course that I took was Spanish 205 with Jose Cernan Bazan. It was a really good class because having been abroad in Brazil for a year I hadn't spoken any Spanish because I had taken Spanish before going to Brazil. I learned Portuguese while I was in Brazil, so to come back to the U.S. and take a Spanish class was good for me to practice Spanish again, but also to be able to differentiate between the two.

Then my winter term I did an interdependent study with Assistant Professor of Anthropology Constanza Ocampo-Raeder, who has been my advisor since that time and onward. That particular class was on Afro Latino identities, looking at different countries in Latin America, doing readings on them and specifically looking on social movements and intersectionality. So looking at race, gender, sexuality and all that stuff within Latin America. That was super interesting and I guess what made me think I am interested in the topic and gave me the academic basis to understand things that I saw all while I was in Brazil.

I've taken other Latin American classes since then, but those were the two main classes that sparked my interest in continuing to pursue a Latin American Studies major.

Q: Since Brazil, have you visited Latin America again?

A: Yes, I went to Peru in the spring of last year. That's the only other time I have been to Latin America. This summer I am going back to Brazil because I am a Mellon Mays undergraduate fellow. So I'm doing an interim research project on Afro Brazilian identity formations specifically how they conceptualize blackness within those communities. I'll be going sort of to the area I was in, but like now I'll actually be in Salvador whereas before I was in the interior of the state that Salvador is in and I'll be working with a woman that I met while I was there in my gap year. She has become a really strong activist not only for black rights, but for women rights, LGBT rights, and so I'm excited. It should be good.



Q: How was your Peru experience?

A: So the program I did was through Carleton and is called Language, Society, and Culture in Peru. That pretty much sums it up! We took one class that was on Art History, the other one was more political science/economics related to Peru, and the last course was more of an open conversation class where we just talked with Jose, who was also my Spanish 205 professor like I mentioned before, about our experiences in Peru. That included discussing about things that we enjoyed, things we didn't like as much, and comparing it to our experiences in the U.S. For our final project in that class we did it on something that we thought was super interesting in Peru, so I talked about the ways that they talked about race because very similar to a lot of other Latin American countries, at least from what I've read, they have very particular views on for example Asian decent Peruvians, indigenous Peruvians, and black Peruvians. It was really interesting to talk about and learn from both hearing and talking to people but also being able to do more reading and research. As for traveling we went to the Amazon, Trujillo which is in the north of Peru, and Machu Picchu, Cusco and that area. It was a great experience, I feel like I got to see a lot of Peru and the program allowed us to really have our own experiences in the country rather than having us be in a classroom and having a host family also helped with us forming our own opinions. Overall it was a really good experience for me because I hasn't been to another Latin American country and hadn't been practicing Spanish, it helped me improve.

Q: Where else would you like to travel?

A: Next on my list is Colombia! I'm going to try to go sometime this summer like while I'm in Brazil, I'll see if I can make that work! Columbia is definitely on list, in part because of my academic interest, but also I heard it's a lovely country and I just really, really want to go. I also heard they have an interesting history with race too in terms of Afro Colombians whom are mostly in the Coastal region. I read an article about it earlier today; I was actually talking about it with Constanza, about how their population has been displaced a lot. They have been moving to the major cities because western companies have been seeking a lot of resources that are in the areas which they resided in and the Colombian government has seen that as an opportunity to get more money which has led to the Afro Columbians to move away from their historically known regions. Also the Dominican Republic, that's another place that has a really interesting history with race. A lot more complex and not 100% Latin American, in the sense that its not just within the DR but also related through their relationship with Haiti, so in that sense I'm interested in going there.

Q: How do you picture your life after Carleton?

A: I'm definitely planning on going and getting my Masters right after Carleton. Right now I'm looking at University of Texas- Austin that's the main school I really want to go to, I'm thinking of getting a joint degree in Urban planning and Latin American studies. The reason for Latin American Studies is very clear because I have been studying it here, but with Urban planning I've always been interested in policy and how that has affected people of African descent in Latin America and here in the U.S. With Urban planning in particular I feel like a lot of the disadvantages that people of African decent in Latin America have and elsewhere has to do with space and where they are located. For example, in Brazil a lot of Black people are located in the Favelas which has to do with economics too, but what I would try to do through Urban planning both in the U.S. and abroad is think about how urban space is developed, how people are marginalized, kept away from basic resources like Hospitals, sanitation, and education by where they are placed in the cities. So thinking of ways to diminish the effects of this marginalized, through either putting more schools in these areas or busing students from these low-income communities to better schools if possible. I don't have too much of a background now, so it's hard to say exactly what I'll do with that, but my hope is to go into some government or city planning as a profession after Graduate school.

Winter Term Events



Mosquito Empires: Why a Historian Spent His Best Years Struggling to Learn About Arcane Arthropods

Public Lecture by **Prof John R. McNeill**

Thursday, February 11th, 2016
5:00 – 6:00 pm / Leighton 305

The History Department is pleased to announce the upcoming Winter 2016 Distinguished Herbert P. Lefler lecture, *Mosquito Empires: Why a Historian Spent His Best Years Struggling to Learn About Arcane Arthropods*, on Thursday, February 11, 2016, at 5 pm in Leighton 305, to be presented by Professor John R. McNeill, environmental historian, Georgetown University.

His most recent book, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914*, was an AHA Beveridge Prize winner, received a PROSE award from the Association of American Publishers, and was listed by the Wall Street Journal among the best books in early American history. In 2010 he was awarded the Toynbee Prize for academic and public contributions to humanity. In 2012-15 he served as a Vice-President of the American Historical Association and in 2011-13 as President of the American Society for Environmental History.

Sponsored by History Department.



Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616): the Library and Archive of a Mestizo Writer

Public talk by guest speaker **Professor Paul Firbas**

Wednesday February 17th, 2016
Gould Library Athenaeum – 5:00pm

Professor Firbas is a specialist on colonial literature and particularly on Peruvian literature from the colonial period. He has published various books and articles about colonial literature and is currently preparing an exhibit and a catalog for the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid about the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. **Sponsored by the Spanish Department.**



The Gary Wynia Memorial Lecture on Latin American Political Economy: *The Rise of China in 21st Century Latin America*

Public Talk by **Carol Wise**, Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California, Dornsife

Friday, February 26th, 2016
4:30 – 6:00 pm / Library Athenaeum

Carol Wise earned her PhD at Columbia University. She was a faculty member at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC for eight years. Professor Wise specializes in international political economy and development, with an emphasis on Latin America. She has written widely on trade integration, exchange rate crises, institutional reform, and the political economy of market restructuring in the region. **Sponsored by Political Science Department.**



Off-campus Studies



Associated Colleges of the Midwest- ACM New Study Away Program in Rio de Janeiro

The new [Brazil: Culture, Community, & Language at PUC-Rio](#) program was created in partnership with [Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro](#) and is an ideal fit for students interested in developing an in-depth comparative perspective on topics such as race and society, an emerging global economy, political corruption and reform, or sports and culture.

Students will take courses taught in English at PUC-Rio, along with a required course in Portuguese language available at all levels of proficiency. Elective courses focus on Brazilian culture in areas such as anthropology and sociology, art and design, history, business and marketing, and international relations.

Students can apply now to join the inaugural Brazil at PUC-Rio program cohort in fall 2016. ACM also offers a semester exchange program at the Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora (UFJF). To learn more about these and other off-campus study options, **visit** ACM.edu/programs.

Society, Culture and Language in Peru

The program will be based in Peru's capital city. A city of 8,000,000, with extensive neighborhoods sprawling outside the traditional and business centers, Lima area has been the center of key cultural developments in the Americas since 5,000 years before the appearance of the Inca Empire, and later, together with Mexico, the center of Spanish dominion in colonial times. The program will also include two extended stays in the Northern coast (based in Trujillo) and Southern highlands (based in Cusco). Stays in Lima and in those areas (and shorter trips to other sites) will allow students to observe the differing sides and the contradictions and paradoxes of modernization in a "third-world" setting. The program's primary objective is to create conditions for the students to reflect on such reality and the cultural artifacts created by the peoples of Peru. Contact the OCS office or Jose Cerna Bazan if you have any questions.

Information Meeting: Monday, February 22 at 4:30pm in LDC 104