



Letter from the Director



Dr. Rachel Ida Buff

Hello to all our students, community partners and supporters. I am the new(ish) Director of the Cultures and Communities Program. I came into the position at the start of 2018.

I have been teaching at UWM since 2004, in History and Comparative Ethnic Studies. My academic and community focus is on immigration history and immigrant rights. Last year I published my most recent book, *Against the Deportation Terror: Organizing for Immigrant Rights in the Twentieth Century*.

I bring to the Cultures and Communities Program over a decade of engagement with immigrant rights in Milwaukee as well as an ongoing commitment to education for social justice. The Director position brings me in contact with new and established partners in the university and beyond.

We are doing many exciting new things, as well as continuing to deliver high-quality advising, classroom and service learning programs. Drop by our offices in Merrill 144-148, check out our beautiful new mural painted by UWM Community Arts students, and share your ideas!



UWM Curriculum Designers and Instructors with high school students at Ronald Reagan High School

Cultures and Communities Partners with Milwaukee Public Schools to Create Ethnic Studies for High School Social Studies Classes

The Cultures and Communities Program has received a \$5,000 grant from Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) to create a “drop-in” Ethnic Studies curriculum. Designed to enhance the capacity of MPS high school social studies curriculum, the “drop-in” curriculum covers questions of race, gender, sexuality and power in historical and contemporary context.

The grant funds a team of UWM undergraduate students to plan and create the curriculum in Fall 2018. Currently, five talented undergraduate students are working together on this project. They have received suggestions and encouragement from students at Ronald Reagan High School (see picture), where they are also providing support to teachers who want to develop Ethnic Studies units for their courses.

The team will pilot the curriculum in an MPS social studies classroom during Spring, 2019; in Summer, 2019, selected MPS students will join the UWM team to assess the curriculum and its implementation and plan for the next academic year. We hope this might be a capacity-building program, perhaps coming to a high school near you!

CURRENT PROJECTS



Documenting Deportation students in dialogue with Voces de la Frontera Executive Director Christine Neumann-Ortiz

Documenting Deportation

Last year, Phase One of the Documenting Deportation project began with a social media comment by internationally-renowned immigration scholar, Donna Rae Gabaccia, asking how historians would be able to understand the raids being perpetrated on immigrant communities in the United States. After Gabaccia's comments, she and Cultures and Communities Director Rachel Ida Buff assembled a team of graduate and undergraduate students to document incidents of deportation in all 50 states. The results—a comprehensive compilation of 2017 media coverage—will be archived at the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

UWM team member Margarita Garcia-Rojas (pictured at right) received Undergraduate Research Office support for her Documenting Deportation Research. At the Spring Undergraduate Research Fair, Garcia-Rojas won a Senior Research Award.

With continued support from UWM's Undergraduate Research Office, a Phase Two Documenting Deportation team of four students, led by Garcia-Rojas, continues the project by collecting accounts of raids and deportations in Wisconsin. Five undergraduate students are assembling articles from the English and Spanish language press in the state and working on content analysis of these accounts. In addition, they are doing research specifically on the history of the movement for immigrant rights in Wisconsin and amassing a database about Central American migration.



Documenting Deportation Team Leader Margarita Garcia-Rojas

Margarita is a senior Latin American, Caribbean, & U.S. Latinx Studies student who has been working with Dr. Rachel Buff since May 2017 to create the

Documenting Deportation archive, an international partnership between librarians, archivists, scholars, and students. Her work includes contextualizing Trump-era immigration policies by comparing them to previous policies, analyzing the use of rhetoric, and analyzing the emotional impact on documented and undocumented communities.

Last year, she also interned with Dr. Jasmine Alinder on the Lands We Share initiative, a part of the Wisconsin Farms Oral History Project which traces the genealogy of people involved in urban agriculture in Milwaukee, the use of land, and its relationship to race and ethnicity.

Although Documenting Deportation concluded in 2017, Margarita and the team chose to continue the project. It is now in its third phase—documentation of Wisconsin deportations: a collaborative oral-history project with Voces de la Frontera and the UWM Archives; and Northern Triangle research focusing on migration from Central America. She is also working to introduce Ethnic Studies in MPS high schools.

Margarita was born in Mexico, migrating at the age of three, and has lived in Milwaukee ever since. Drawing from her own experience, her senior research project, "So American it Hurts: Stories of the 1.5 Generation," will focus on the experience of growing up undocumented or in a mixed status family. Margarita aspires to be a scholar activist, pursuing a doctorate in Migration Studies while working directly with immigrant communities.



The Defiant: Protest Movements in Post-Liberal America

Dawson Barrett, a UWM alumnus and author of *The Defiant: Protest Movements in Post-Liberal America*, and the widely heralded popular history, *Teen Rebels: Stories of Successful High School Activists, From the Little Rock Nine to the Class of Tomorrow*, visited UWM in September 2018. He gave a talk in the Fireside Lounge, and conducted an organizing workshop for the Rufus King High School Youth Chapter of the ACLU.

Dawson Barrett dropping some knowledge on Rufus King High School students

COMMUNITY MURAL

The Cultures and Communities Mural

The Cultures and Communities Program is very excited to house a new mural painted by UWM Community Arts students! (Check it out in Merrill 148). The mural was designed and painted by Shavonte Grant and MacKenna Krupa. We recently sat down with Shavonte and MacKenna to ask them about the project.

Q: Where did the idea for the mural come from?

MacKenna: The Cultures and Communities Program asked Raoul Deal, the artist in residence for Cultures and Communities, and he passed the idea to us and we both needed a senior project. So he said that "these are two people that I am confident in who could do a good job." It was a really an awesome opportunity for us because neither of us had led a mural project before so it was a good experience for our futures. If we wanted to do more murals we know we could do them now from start to finish.

Shavonte: Basically this was our BA project, our final project for graduation. We wanted to create something that was painting and drawing focused.

Q: What did you want the mural to say? What does it represent?

Shavonte: One of the big things is we really wanted it to be a great representation of Milwaukee. Obviously not the whole community but a piece of it. We really dive into the African American community in Milwaukee, and we wanted to create images that are very empowering and show its history. So we included images like Colin Kaepernick, which was nice because it made it more of a worldwide thing. It wasn't just the Milwaukee community; that was our way of connecting the Milwaukee community to the world as a whole. Kaepernick is from here. So we had him and Alicia Garza, who help start the whole Black Lives Matter movement, which was also really nice because that was something that impacted everyone. Then we had other things like gardening, which stands for grassroots organizations in Milwaukee.



MacKenna: The images on the other side were based on the fair housing marches of the 1960s in Milwaukee. That was kind of our starting point because it was the fiftieth anniversary. We read a poetry book for inspiration called *Where We Want to Live* that was written by poets in from Milwaukee. That was a huge inspiration for us. We wanted to bridge the fair housing marches to today. It helped with the format of the walls so we could have past and present next to each other.

Q: How do you envision the relationship between art and activism, social engagement, and community? Do you think there is a relationship?

MacKenna: I definitely think there is a relationship. Another thing we looked at for inspiration was print making and symbols that could be replicated that represent a movement. Using art and activism together you can spread your message wider. Even if your not using words, just symbols ,it's going to grab people's attention and cause people to really think more.

Shavonte: To add on to that, that's something I thought was important: a mural that is also educating people as well. That's how I look at it. I guess educating people historically. When you see it, yeah there's some things on it that might seem familiar like Colin Kaepernick, but then there's other things in there, like the images from the fair housing marches in Milwaukee, I feel like a lot of people might not fully understand.

It makes them think: Why do they have people marching? And others gardening? They can ask questions and become more informed about the Milwaukee community.

Q: How did the mural fit into your academic program?

Shavonte: I always like doing things in the community. I volunteer a lot outside of school and when this project came along it gave me a way of using art to give back to the community. It put together my passion for being involved in the community and my art.

MacKenna: I have a similar experience. I love volunteering and working within the community. One of my first service learning experiences was with Raoul Deal working on a mural project. I loved taking the skills I learned with him and applying them to my own project.

Shavonte: I think community arts are important because you're studying cultures and communities. How can you work within a community if you don't fully understand it? So it's important to do service learning and learn more about the community you're working in.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



"The Latinx Educational Pipeline": Dr. Soto at the Latina Resource Center



Dr. Lilia Soto speaking at UMOS

Visit from Dr. Lilia Soto, University of Wyoming

In October 2018, the Cultures and Communities Program was honored to host a visit from Dr. Lilia Soto, Associate Professor of Latina/o Studies and American Studies at the University of Wyoming. Lilia's work explores the intersections of gender, age, time, and migration. Lilia's visit provided the Program with an excellent opportunity to contribute to its mission of facilitating collaboration between scholars and Milwaukee communities and inspire student engagement with local and national issues.

While at UWM, Lilia not only met with UWM students and faculty, but also had a packed meeting on "The Latinx Educational Pipeline" with local students, activists and community members at the RAICES group of United Migrant Opportunity Services' (UMOS) Latina Resource Center. She also gave an amazing public talk at the UMOS Chase Street campus on her recent book, *Girlhood in the Borderlands: Mexican Teens Caught in the Crossroads of Migration*, which explores the lives of Mexican American girls on both sides of the border: how they are affected by separation from family members, as well as patterns of migration and immigration enforcement.

Milwaukee Scholars

Funded as a partnership between the Burke Foundation and UWM, the MKE Scholars program is designed exclusively for students graduating from a Milwaukee high school who are affiliated with a Burke Foundation-sponsored program. These programs include College Possible, Boys & Girls Club of Milwaukee, Boys & Girls Club of Dane County, PEARLS for Teen Girls, United Community Center, Nativity Jesuit Academy, Carmen High School of Science & Technology. Students participating in the MKE Scholars program:

- Participate in a summer bridge program
- Complete a four-semester Learning Community to earn the Cultures and Communities Certificate

- Meet regularly with the MKE Scholars Success Coach and Peer Mentor team
- Receive financial support in the form of scholarships, textbook stipend, and the ability to apply to access an emergency fund
- Option to participate in the MKE Scholars Living Learning Community in Sandburg Residence Hall

Each year, Cultures and Communities partners with MKE Scholars to help the Scholars participate in a cohort-based learning community program that aligns with the Cultures and Communities certificate program. The Cultures and

Become a Friend of Cultures and Communities!

Your charitable gift helps the Cultures and Communities program to promote diversity and civic engagement by:

- Bringing noted authors, artists, educators and community leaders to Milwaukee for important public events.
- Strengthening partnerships with local non-profit organizations where service learning students learn first-hand about problems related to social justice, the environment, education, immigration and other critical issues facing the community.

To become a Friend of Cultures and Communities please visit us at:

<https://uwm.edu/cultures-communities/give>

CONTACT US!

Cultures & Communities
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Merrill Hall 144
2512 E Hartford Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53211
cc-info@uwm.edu

Communities Certificate gives students a chance to meet general education requirements as they explore cultural diversity in the classroom and through service to the Milwaukee community.

Scholar Snapshot:

- 89% of the Scholars are Pell Eligible
- 98% of the Scholars are students of color
- 56% of Scholars begin the Summer Bridge experience needing developmental coursework
- 95% retention rate over the summer to fall term.