

Dear all,

I'm thrilled to have joined the great CLACS family here at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It is an exciting time to be part of the students of Latin America and the Caribbean. From the return of the PRI in Mexico, to the unprecedented changes in Cuba, the emergence of Brazil as a world power, the socio-economic development in Bolivia's El Alto, and Argentina's female president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, Latin America and the Caribbean continues to be fertile ground for inquiry, understanding, and analysis. My role on campus will be to actively assist in providing the essential service of access to information, in addition to continue developing the renowned and comprehensive collection of resources about the areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. As some of you might know, I am intimately attached to our campus, as I obtained my second master's degree from the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies under the advice of Prof. Nils Jacobsen between 2004 and 2006. During my years at CLACS I took different courses that have shaped my appreciation of LA&C that covered the disciplines of anthropology, history, and political science. The end result of my research on national identity, culture, and politics was a thesis that studied the role of the patron saint festivities of San Germán, Puerto Rico, on a particular vision of the Puerto Rican nation. I argued that through the different activities, performances, literature, art works, and organization *sangermeños* viewed a Hispanic, catholic, white, and patriarchal idea of *puertorriqueñidad*, which consented to U.S. rule on the island. After my years at Illinois, I enrolled in the history program at the University of Chicago, finishing with a Ph.D. degree in June 2012. There, I studied under the guidance of Prof. Dain Borges, Prof. Emilio Kourí, and Prof. Agnes Lugo-Ortiz (Spanish Department). My dissertation at UChicago focused on sport as the embodiment of colonial politics and national identity in Puerto Rico during the twentieth century. Central to my argument is that the development of sport infrastructure, in its physical and bureaucratic sides, is as much political as it is a cultural process of identity. By analyzing the way sport was regularized and institutionalized we can understand the way Puerto Rican sport mediated in a broader process of a U.S.-P.R. colonial political consolidation, which in the meantime aided in the development of an identity of athletic culture.

Once again, I am truly happy to be here with all of you and look forward to meeting you in the near future. Feel free to stop by my office in the Main Library, room 337A (inside room 325 and keep going to your left), e-mail me at [asotomay@illinois.edu](mailto:asotomay@illinois.edu), find us online at <http://www.library.illinois.edu/ias/lat>, or I'll see you at one of the many great activities on campus, or in class.

Saludos y hasta pronto / saudações e até breve.

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