

From the LASA2017 Congress Program Co-Chairs: The Next 50 Years of LASA Begin in Lima

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The year 2016 has been an eventful one in Latin America thus far. We have already witnessed the dramatic impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in Brazil and President Evo Morales's loss in the referendum on whether he would be able to seek reelection for a third time; coupled with other recent political developments, these events have led to the notion that the region's pink tide is receding and being replaced by a rightward turn. In Central America, meanwhile, an ongoing sprawling corruption investigation in Guatemala that has implicated much of the political elite has raised hopes of an end to impunity, while the assassination of human rights activist Berta Cáceres, a co-founder of the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations and a recipient of the world's leading environmental award (the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize), in neighboring Honduras dashed any such expectations. Once again dramatic changes seem to be under way in Latin America. It is therefore extremely fitting that for the sixth time (counting Puerto Rico as a part of Latin America) in its 50-year history LASA will once again be holding its Congress in Latin America, this time in Lima, Peru. (Previous conferences were held in Brazil in 2009, in Mexico in 1983 and 1997, and in Puerto Rico in 2006 and 2015.)

Lima is an ideal venue for LASA2017. A cosmopolitan city of over eight million inhabitants, with a world-famous cuisine and temperate climate, Lima is the site of Peru's most prestigious centers of higher education, including the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, which will serve as our host, and the Universidad Nacional de San Marcos, which dates back to 1551. We are certain that Lima's vibrant academic scene will make for robust intellectual exchanges with local faculty, researchers, activists, and students.

The rarity of this event for an association dedicated to promoting collaboration and exchange among Latin Americanists across the hemisphere (and the world) points to the timeliness of the theme for the upcoming Congress: "Diálogos de Saberes / Dialogues of Knowledge." The aim of the Congress will be to promote dialogue across disciplines and within disciplines, across regions between academics located in the North and the South, and between activists and intellectuals. We hope this will lead to fruitful discussions and passionate debates that will enrich Latin American studies in all its iterations and perhaps lead to new directions for the field.

We are honored that President Joanne Rappaport has asked us to serve as program co-chairs for LASA2017 in Lima, Peru. We believe this will be an exciting Congress that will highlight the idea of collaborative scholarship. We are planning a number of exciting presidential sessions and other special activities that will all reflect the theme of "Diálogos de Saberes" in some way. Because it is taking place in the region, we anticipate that LASA2017 will command greater than average Latin American participation. The fantastic group of colleagues who have graciously agreed to serve as track chairs—from North, Central, and South America, the Caribbean, and Europe—reflect the diversity of the association. We are extremely grateful for their service, which is key to the success of the Congress.

While most of the 33 thematic tracks remain the same as in previous years, in conversation with the track chairs we have updated the names of some of the tracks to clarify their topic areas. We also consolidated some existing tracks where there was significant overlap and have added a few new tracks to reflect significant new areas of inquiry in the

field of Latin American studies. These revised tracks include: Art, Archaeology, Architecture, and Visual Culture (to reflect the prominence of archaeology in Peru), Economics and Development, Health and Society, Human Rights and the Politics of Memory, Interrogating Latin American Studies, Latino Diasporas, Otros Saberes and Alternative Methods, and Sexualities and LGBTQ Studies.

As in past years track chairs will score all panel and individual paper proposals based on the following criteria: significance and appeal for the field, clarity and coherence of the proposal, and compliance with submission instructions. The co-chairs of each track also have the opportunity to organize one invited LASA panel or roundtable on a topic relevant to their track that connects with the overall theme of the Congress.

In order to assist the track chairs in assembling panels from individual paper proposals once they are accepted, in addition to the paper-matching system that allows individuals to connect with others proposing similar topics, we have asked all the track chairs to develop four to five themes under which individual paper proposals could be grouped. For example, someone submitting an individual paper proposal to the Sexualities and LGBTQ Studies track could designate the theme that best fits their paper from the following list: (a) Representaciones y cuerpos lésbicos; (b) Heterosexualidades; (c) Masculinidades; or (d) Trans, Queer, Cuir.

As LASA embarks on its sixth decade, we are looking forward to meeting in Lima for its 51st Congress. Please stay tuned for more exciting news about LASA2017 in the months to come. ■