

Elaine A. Peña

Washington University in St. Louis
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Research Interests

Border and Borderlands Studies, Hemispheric Latinx Studies, Material Religion, Built Environment, Performance Ethnography

Academic and Professional Positions

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| 2023- | Professor, Washington University in St. Louis
Department of Performing Arts
American Culture Studies Program
Department of Anthropology |
| 2022-2023 | Professor, George Washington University
Department of American Studies |
| 2018-2019 | Visiting Scholar, University of Edinburgh
Social Anthropology, School of Social and Political Science |
| 2013-2022 | Associate Professor, George Washington University
Department of American Studies |
| 2009-2010 | Principal Investigator, Smithsonian Latino Center
Latino D.C. History Project |
| 2007-2013 | Assistant Professor, George Washington University
Department of American Studies |
| 2007-2008 | Postdoctoral Associate & Lecturer, Yale University
Ethnicity, Race, and Migration Program
Department of Religious Studies |
| 2006-2007 | Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Latina/o Studies Program |

Education

Ph.D. Performance Studies, June 2006
Specialization: Cultural Anthropology
Gender Studies Certificate
Northwestern University, Evanston IL USA

B.A. Drama & English (double major, cum laude), May 2001
Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio TX USA

Books

2020. *¡Viva George! Celebrating Washington's Birthday at the U.S.-Mexico Border*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

*Jim Parish Award for Documentation Publication of Local/Regional History, Webb County Heritage Foundation

Reviews: *Southwestern Historical Review* 125.1; *Pacific Historical Review* 90.4; *Journal of American Ethnic History* 41.2; *Journal of American Folklore* 135, No. 537; *The Western Historical Quarterly* 53.2; *Material Religion* 19.2

2011. *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

*Honorable Mention, Best Book in Latino/a Anthropology, Association of Latina & Latino Anthropologists (ALLA), American Anthropological Association, 2012.

Reviews: *American Ethnologist* 39.4; *The Americas* 70.2; *Religious Studies Review* 38.2; *Hispanic American Historical Review* 92.3; *American Catholic Studies* 123.2; *e-misférica* 8.2; *Journal of Hispanic and Latino Theology* 19.1; *Not Even Past* January 2013

Edited Books

2020. Guest Editor. *Gómez-Peña Unplugged: Texts on Live Art, Social Practice and Imaginary Activism (2008-2020)*. London: Routledge.

Reviews: *American Theatre Magazine*; *L.A. Times*; *The Chicago Tribune*, *Publishers Weekly*

2005. Editor, with Guillermo Gómez-Peña. *Ethno-techno: Writings on performance, activism, and pedagogy*. New York: Routledge.

Reviews: *Theatre Journal* 59.3; *Contemporary Theatre Review* 17.1; *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 6.3; *Australasian Drama Studies* 50; *Feminist Media Studies* 6.3; *alt.theatre—Cultural Diversity and the Stage* 5.3

Edited Volumes

Forthcoming, Fall 2026. Guest Editor. Special Issue: Border Festivals. *The Journal of Festive Studies*.

Journal Articles

2024. José-María Muñoz and Elaine A. Peña. "The Inconspicuous Power of Border Festivals: Insights from the Chad-Cameroon Border." *The Journal of Borderlands Studies*.

2017. "Paso Libre (Open Border): Border Enactment, Infrastructure, and Crisis Resolution at the Port of Laredo (1954-1957)." *The Drama Review*. 61(2): 11-31.

2017. "Time to Pray: Devotional Rhythms and Space Sacralization Processes at the Mexico-U.S. Border." *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art, and Belief* 13(4): 461-48.

2014. "More than a dead American hero: Washington, the Improved Order of Red Men, and the Limits of Civil Religion," *American Literary History* 26(1): 61-82.

2008. "Beyond México: Guadalupan Sacred Space Production and Mobilization in a Chicago suburb," *American Quarterly* 60(3): 721-747.

2006. "De-politicizing border space," [Hybrid Imaginaries/Fractured Geographies](#). *e-misférica* 3(2). Eds. Ulla D. Berg and Roberto Varea. New York: New York University, Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics. web.

Peer Reviewed Book Chapters

2021. "George Washington and Miguel Hidalgo Embrace at the U.S.-Mexico Border: Reckoning with Civil Religion's Proper Geography and Transnational Potential." In *Civil Religion Today: Religion and the American Nation in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Rhys Williams, Raymond J. Haberski, and Philip Goff. New York University Press.

2020. "Ch. 12: Geopolitics, Space Sacralization, and Devotional Labor on the U.S.-Mexico Border." In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Materiality*, edited by Vasudha Narayanan, 441-469. Newark. John Wiley & Sons.

2013. "Reveling in Patriotism: Celebrating America on the U.S.-Mexico border during the Mexican Revolution." In *Open Borders to a Revolution: Culture, Politics and Migration*, edited by Jaime Marroquín, Adela Pineda and Magdalena Mieri, 191-212. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Scholarly Press.

E-Forums

2024. "Toward the Bridge: Migration, Devotional Labor, and Infrastructure at Mexico's Northern Border." [E-Forum: Religion, Migration, and Worldmaking in the Borderlands](#). Eds. Robert Albro and Luciana Gandini. American University, Center for Latin American and Latino Studies and the Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. web.

Book Reviews

2023. *Reverberations of Racial Violence: Critical Reflections on the History of the Borders*. Sonia Hernández and John Morán González, eds. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 38.3: 527-528.

2022. *Meatpacking America: How Migration, Work, and Faith Unite and Divide the Heartland*. Kristy Nabhan-Warren. University of North Carolina Press, 2021. *The Catholic Historical Review* 108.4: 823-825.

2022. *Borderlands Curanderos: The Worlds of Santa Teresa Urrea and Don Pedrito Jaramillo*. Jennifer Koshatka Seman. University of Texas Press, 2021. *Pacific Historical Review* 91.1: 144-145.

2018. *The U.S.-Mexico Transborder Region: Cultural Dynamics and Historical Interactions*. Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez and Josiah Heyman, eds. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2017. *American Ethnologist* 45(3): 426-427.

Public History Reports and Exhibits

2024. “Festivals, Kente, and Culture Heritage: Integration from Below in the Ghana-Togo Borderlands,” United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Exhibit funded by The British Academy, the UNDP, and the University of Edinburgh. Accra, Ghana, 25 June 2024.

2023. “African Border Festivals: Culture, Kinship, and Practical Governance.” Centro d’Arte e Cultura Il Ghetto, Cagliari, Sardinia (Italy). Exhibit funded by The British Academy’s Humanities and Social Sciences Tackling the UK’s International Challenges Program. Project: *Border Festivals, Partitioned Communities and Practical Governance in West Africa*.

2010. “[Latino D.C. History Project: The National Is International](#).” Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Latino Center.

2010. “Latino D.C. History Project: The Afro-Cuban Presence in Washington D.C.” Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Latino Center.

Grants and Fellowships (selection)

- 2019-2021 Co-PI, Research Grant, The British Academy (IC4/100223)
The Humanities and Social Sciences Tackling the UK’s International Challenges Program
Project: *Border Festivals, Partitioned Communities and Practical Governance in West Africa*
- 2015-2016 George Washington University, University Facilitating Fund Research Grant
- 2013 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Summer Stipend Award
- 2010 Co-PI, Research Grant, Washington D.C. Humanities Council
Project: *Stories of Spanish Speaking Washington*
- 2010 Texas Red Men Foundation, Research Grant
- 2007-2009 Postdoctoral Fellowship, The Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Yale University
- 2007-2008 Ford Foundation, Postdoctoral Fellowship (*declined*)
- 2006-2007 Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellowship, Department of Latina/Latino Studies, University of Illinois Urbana- Champaign
- 2006 Mellon Research Grant, Alice Kaplan Humanities Center, Northwestern University
- 2005-2006 Dissertation Year Fellowship, Northwestern University
- 1999-2000 Research Grant, Ronald E. McNair Program, U.S. Department of Education

Honors

- 2021 Jim Parish Award for Documentation Publication of Local/Regional History, *¡Viva George! Celebrating Washington's Birthday at the U.S.-Mexico Border*. Webb County Heritage Foundation.
- 2019 National Research Fellow, Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis
- 2012 Honorable Mention, *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe*. Best Book in Latina/o Anthropology, American Anthropological Association.
- 2010-2012 Young Scholars of American Religion, Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis
- 2006 Finalist, C.W. Newcombe Dissertation Fellowship
- 2006 Honorable Mention, Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship
- 2005 Alternate Candidate, Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Research Fellowship
- 2005 Alternate Candidate, Mexico-North Transnational Research Fellowship
- 2001 Marguerite Davenport Humanities Award, Our Lady of the Lake University
- 1999-2001 McNair Scholar, The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, U.S. Department of Education

Invited Talks and Workshops (selection)

Panelist. Colloquium: "Land, Performance and Latinx Studies," Harvard Divinity School. November 8, 2024.

Workshop. The La Pocha Nostra/VestAndPage Summit at Live Art Ireland. Tipperary, Ireland. July 17-25, 2024.

Research Presentation. E.A. Peña and S. Leet. "What else can borders do?," Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts, Washington University in St. Louis, November 14, 2023.

Book Talk. *¡Viva George! Celebrating Washington's Birthday at the US-Mexico Border*, Center for Latin American and Latino Studies, American University, May 23, 2023

Workshop. "Religion and Environmentally Induced Displacement in Latin America and the Caribbean," American University's Center for Latin American & Latino Studies (CLALS) and the Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico (UNAM), March 16-17, 2023.

Book Talk. *¡Viva George! Celebrating Washington's Birthday at the US-Mexico Border*, Social Justice Leadership Series, Texas A&M International University, February 16, 2023.

Book Talk. *¡Viva George! Celebrating Washington's Birthday at the US-Mexico Border*, Laredo College, February 15, 2023.

Panelist. “Taking Time, Sound, Space/Latinxs on Stage,” Georgetown University. April 7, 2022.

Workshop. “From Exchange to Traffic: Pilgrimage as Event of Mobility,” Department of Economic Experimentation, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, February 11, 2022.

Guest Lecture. “Latinos and Immigration,” SUST 3003: World on a Plate. Course Creator and Lecturer: Chef José Andrés. George Washington University, October 12, 2021.

Book Talk. *¡Viva George! Celebrating Washington's Birthday at the US-Mexico Border*, Queen’s University Belfast, Anthropology Seminar, November 23, 2021.

Book Talk. *¡Viva George! Celebrating Washington's Birthday at the US-Mexico Border*, History Summit 2021. <https://www.historysummit.com/>

Book Talk. *¡Viva George! Celebrating Washington's Birthday at the US-Mexico Border*, Smithsonian National Museum of American History (NMAH) Tuesday Colloquium, February 9, 2021.

Ford Evening Book Talk. The Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon, February 4, 2021.

Webinar. Religion & Memorializing the State. Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture. Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis, January 21, 2021.

Workshop. “Emplacing Religion: Transnational and Cross-Border Perspectives,” Decolonial Collaborative Research Group (DCRG). Stanford University, October 2020.

Paper. Theologically Engaged Anthropology II. Project: Rapid Religious Change Colloquium, Victoria College/ University of Toronto, May 2019.

Research Presentation. Department of Religion, Emory University, March 2019.

Guest Lecture. *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe*. HDS 3223/REL 1009 “Religion, Gender and Politics in Transnational Perspective.” Professors Leila Ahmed and Ann Braude. Harvard Divinity School (U.S.A.), November 2018.

Paper. “Ritual and Infrastructure at the U.S.-Mexico Border,” Politics & International Studies Research Seminar Series. Queen’s University Belfast (U.K.), November 2018.

Paper. “Time to Pray: Devotional Rhythms at the Mexico-U.S. Border,” Religious Studies Research Seminar Series. School of Divinity. University of Edinburgh (U.K.), October 2018.

Paper. Religious Movement(s): Migration and Belief in the Americas. Centro de las Américas/ Americas Center. University of Virginia (U.S.A.), Apr. 2018.

Research Presentation. Department of Social Anthropology, University of St. Andrews (U.K.), May 2017.

Paper. Religion in the Americas Workshop, Princeton University (U.S.A.), Apr. 2017.

Paper. "Paso Libre (Open Border): Ritual as Crisis Resolution at the Port of Laredo (1954-1957)," Institute of Sacred Music Colloquium, Yale University (U.S.A.), Mar. 2017.

Research Presentation. The School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, Arizona State University (U.S.A.), Dec. 2016.

Research Presentation. Department of American Studies, University of Manchester (U.K.), Jul. 2015.

Presentation. Interdisciplinary Ethnography Workshop: Blurring the Boundaries of Practice. Department of Religion. Princeton University (U.S.A.), Mar. 2015.

Presentation. Space/Place Session. Biennial Conference on Religion and American Culture. The Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, Indiana University (U.S.A.), June 2013.

Paper. "La Plaza Mariana: Urban development and sacred space production at la Virgen de Guadalupe's shrine in Mexico City," University of California Riverside (U.S.A.), March 2013.

Research Presentation. Department of Religious Studies and the Center for Comparative Studies in Race & Ethnicity, Stanford University (U.S.A.), Feb. 2013.

Research Presentation. Department of Religious Studies, University of Texas (U.S.A.), Jan. 2013.

Paper. American Literatures/American Religions. University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana (U.S.A.), Oct. 2012.

Keynote Speaker. National Council for the Arts & National Council for Media and Public Affairs annual meeting, The George Washington University (U.S.A.), Nov. 2011.

Paper. Mexican Revolution Centennial Symposium. Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington D.C. (U.S.A.), Sept. 2010.

Presentation. Traveling Politics Workshop. Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton University (U.S.A.), Mar. 2010.

Research Presentation. American Studies Program, Yale University (U.S.A.), Feb. 2009.

Paper. The Americas in America: New Developments in US Latino/Latina Studies Scholarship. Georgetown University (U.S.A.), Apr. 2009.

Keynote Speaker. Latino Studies Inaugural Symposium. Northwestern University (U.S.A.), Apr. 2009.

Paper. "Las Guadalupanas de Querétaro," Women, Religion, and Globalization Program, Yale University (U.S.A.), Dec. 2008.

Paper. American Catholic Studies Seminar, CUSHWA Center for the Study of American Catholicism, University of Notre Dame (U.S.A.), May 2007.

Research Presentation. Department of American Studies. George Washington University (U.S.A.), Jan. 2007.

Research Presentation. Department of Women's and Gender Studies. Wellesley College (U.S.A.), Jan. 2007.

Research Presentation. Department of Performance Studies. Texas A&M University (U.S.A.), Oct. 2006.

Keynote Speaker. 11th Annual Ronald E. McNair Scholars Banquet. Our Lady of the Lake University (U.S.A.), Sept. 29, 2006.

Presentation. Centro de Estudios Antropológicos. El Colegio de Michoacán (Mexico), Jul. 2004.

Conferences (selection)

Panelist. “Why Study Border Festivals?” African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE) Annual Meeting, September 11-13, 2024. Co-hosted by UNDP Africa Borderlands Centre and The International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC). Nairobi, Kenya.

Panelist. “Ethnography, Performance, and Religious and Cultural Identity in the Twenty-First Century,” American Academy of Religion, November 2021.

Panelist. “Decolonial Futures: Religion as a Source of Resistance,” *Raising Our Voices* (Virtual Event). American Anthropological Association, November 2020.

Discussant. Author-Meets-Critics session on “Savages, Romans, and Despots: Thinking about Others from Montaigne to Herder” by Robert Launay. American Anthropological Association Meeting. Vancouver, BC. November 2019.

Workgroup Participant. El mundo al revés: Humor, ruido y performance. Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics Encuentro. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad de México. June 2019.

Discussant. Geertz Prize Panel: N. Fadeke Castor’s *Spiritual Citizenship: Transnational Pathways from Black Power to Ifá in Trinidad*. ‘Politics of Religious Knowledge and Ignorance.’ Society for the Anthropology of Religion (SAR) Conference, Victoria College, University of Toronto, May 2019.

Paper. Association of Borderlands Studies World Conference, Universität Wien (Austria) and Central European University (Hungary), Jul. 2018.

Discussant. Materiality and Immateriality in the Reproduction of African Borders. African Borderlands Research Network Workshop, Cagliari (Italy), Apr. 2018.

Paper. American Academy of Religion Meeting. San Antonio, Texas (U.S.A.), Nov. 2016.

Workgroup Participant. Excéntrico: disidencia, soberanías, performance. Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics Encuentro. University of Chile-Santiago (Chile), Jul. 2016

Participant. Religion and the Ethics of Forced Migration. Sponsored by the Institute for the Study of International Migration, the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, and the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, Georgetown University (U.S.A.), Oct. 2015.

Paper. Borderlands and Latina/o Studies Seminar. Newberry Library, Chicago, IL (U.S.A.), Sept. 2015.

Paper. American Anthropological Association Meeting. Washington D.C. (U.S.A.), Dec. 2014.

Discussant. Material Religion and Pilgrimage in Mexico: Mary, Matter, Meaning and The Road to Tepeyac. American Academy of Religion Meeting. San Diego, CA (U.S.A.), Nov. 2014.

Paper. Practicing Borders: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Organized by the Dipartimento di scienze sociali e delle istituzioni, Università di Cagliari (Italy), May 2014.

Paper. Borders, Walls, and Security Conference. Raoul Dandurand Chair of Strategic and Diplomatic Studies, Université du Québec à Montreal (Canada), Oct. 2013.

Discussant. Exceeding Boundaries: Approaches to Transnationalism in North American Religions. American Academy of Religion Meeting. Chicago, Illinois (U.S.A.), Nov. 2012.

Paper. American Studies Association Meeting. San Juan, Puerto Rico (U.S.A.), Nov. 2012.

Discussant. *American Quarterly* Roundtable I: Nation and Migration. American Studies Association Meeting. San Antonio, Texas (U.S.A.), Nov. 2010.

Participant. “Making Community: Sharing experiences and knowledge.” Sponsored by the Program in Latin American Studies, the Baltimore Mayor's Office, and *la Organización Latina Estudiantil*, The Johns Hopkins University (U.S.A.), Oct. 2010.

Paper. 18th Annual Conference: Women, Gender and Political Spaces, Historical Perspectives.” St. Hilda’s College, University of Oxford (U.K.), Sept. 2009.

Workgroup Participant. Staging Citizenship: Cultural Rights in the Americas. Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics Encuentro. National University of Colombia-Bogotá (Colombia), Aug. 2009.

Panel Chair. “Visible/Invisible: Women’s work, pain and pleasure in public and private.” American Anthropological Association Meeting. San José, California (U.S.A.), Nov. 2006.

Paper. Association for Theatre in Higher Education Conference, Inaugural Latino/a Focus Group. New York, NY (U.S.A.) Aug. 2003.

Workgroup Participant. Spectacles of Religiosity. Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics Encuentro. New York University (U.S.A.), Jul. 2003.

Teaching

Washington University in St. Louis

Fall 2023	DRAMA 4310/5310 Borders and Boundaries
Spring 2024	AMCS 220 Intro to Latinx Studies
Fall 2024	AMCS 220 Intro to Latinx Studies DRAMA 5105 Intro to Graduate Studies
Spring 2025	DRAMA 4310-5310 Borders and Boundaries

George Washington University (2008-2023)

Department of American Studies
Department of Anthropology
Elliot School of International and Area Studies

Latinos in the U.S.
Borders and Boundaries
Examining America
Diasporic Religion
Transnational Theory and Method
Ethnographic Field Methods
Performance as Object and Method

Yale University (2007-2008)

Ethnicity, Race, & Migration Program
Department of Religious Studies

Diasporic Religion/Devotion in Performance

University of Illinois (2006-2007)

Latina/Latino Studies Program

Claiming Space: Ethnography & Performance

Northwestern University (2003-2004)

School of Communication

Analysis of Literature for Performance

Academic Service (selection)

2024	Committee Member, Latinx Studies Search (AMCS and RLL, WUSTL)
2023	Committee Member, Playwrighting Search (PAD and English, WUSTL)
2023	Chair, PAD Colloquium Committee (AY 24-25, WUSTL)
2022	Chair, PhD Admissions Committee [GWU]
2021 and 2022	Selection Committee Member, Bouchet Graduate Honor Society [GWU]
2021-2022	Member, African American Studies Faculty Search Committee [GWU]
2020	Reviewer, internal NEH Summer Stipend competition [CCAS, GWU]
2020-2022	M.A. Advisor [AMST, GWU]
2019	GW faculty representative at Queen's University Belfast, Research Colloquium, Office of International Programs [University, GWU]
2016-2018	Director of Graduate Studies [AMST, GWU]
2015-2016	Member, Research Advisory Committee [CCAS, GWU]
2015	Member, Arbitrary & Capricious Grievance Review Committee [GWU]
2014-2017	Member, PhD Admission Committee [AMST, GWU]
2012-2013	Member, First Generation Student Pilot Program Committee [CCAS, GWU]
2011-2012	Member, Science, Technology, & Culture Faculty Search Committee [AMST, GWU]
2010-2012	Member, Arts Initiative Steering Committee [University, GWU]
2009-2013	Board Member, Center for Public History [CCAS, GWU]
2009-2010	Member, Af.Am/Africana Studies Faculty Search Committee [AMST, GWU]
2009-2010	Member, AMST undergraduate curriculum committee [AMST, GWU]

Supervision and Mentorship (selection)

Faculty Mentor, Jade Pita and Jonah Zacks, *Siempre Hemos Estado Aquí: Mexican History in St. Louis Project*, WASHU)

Dissertation Committee Member, Tsering Wangmo (Sociocultural Anthropology, WASHU)

Latin Honors Thesis Advisor, Kelly Rojo Reyes (Global Studies and Psychology, B.A. 2025, WASHU)

Faculty Mentor, Nayive Gaytán (ABD, Hispanic Studies and CRE2 Graduate Student Fellow, WASHU)

Mentor, Joe Baez (ABD, AMST, GWU)

PhD Comprehensive Exam Committee Member, Aryn Kelly (ABD, AMST, GWU)

Senior Thesis Supervisor, Chase Kleber (AMST, B.A. 2021, GWU)

**Winner of the Julian Clement Chase Award*

Senior Thesis Director, Anika Raju (Elliot School of International and Area Studies, B.A. 2020, GWU)

Mentor, Anayeli Nuñez, undergraduate student (History and AMST, B.A. 2019, GWU)

**Recipient of a 2018-2019 Luther Rice Fellowship*

PhD Comprehensive Exam Committee Member, Sara Awartani (AMST, PhD 2020, GWU)

PhD Comprehensive Exam and Dissertation Committee Member, Julie Chamberlain (AMST, PhD 2023, GWU)

PhD Comprehensive Exam Committee Member, Rahima Schwenkbeck (AMST, PhD 2017, GWU)

Dissertation Defense External Examiner, Rebecca Bartel (University of Toronto, Department for the Study of Religion, PhD 2016)

Thesis Committee Member, Alicia Díaz (Department of Theatre and Dance, M.F.A. 2015, GWU)

Senior Thesis Director, Brooke Marchewka (Elliot School of International and Area Studies, B.A. 2015, GWU)

Senior Thesis Director, Adam Frankel (Elliot School of International and Area Studies, B.A. 2013, GWU).

Dissertation Committee Member, Bess Matassa (AMST, PhD 2013)

Mentor, Kevin Kelly (American Studies and English, B.A. 2013)

**Recipient of a 2012-2013 Luther Rice Fellowship (GWU)*

Senior Thesis Director, Jack Van Paepeghem (Anthropology, B.A. 2011)

**Winner of the Jane B. Hart Best Undergraduate Thesis Award (GWU)*

Manuscript and Journal Review Work: University of California Press, Duke University Press, Fordham University Press, Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, *American Ethnologist*, *Sophia*, *Theater Research International*, *American Religion*, *Religion and American Culture*, *Pacific Historical Review*, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, *Current Anthropology*

External Activities and Partnerships (selection)

2025-	Editorial Board Member, <i>Performing Ethos: Int. Journal of Ethics in Theatre & Performance</i>
2024-2026	Jury Member, American Academy of Religion's Analytical-Descriptive Book Award
2023-2025	Reviewer, Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowship program
2023-	Co-editor, <i>Religion & American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation</i>
2022-2023	Reviewer, Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Innovation Fellowship program
2021-	Alumni Ambassador, The Op-Ed Project
2019-	Editorial Board Member, <i>American Religion</i>
2019	Grant Application Reviewer, Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship
2018-2022	Board Member, Society for the Anthropology of Religion, American Anthropological Association
2018	Member, Best Book Selection Committee, Association of Latina & Latino Anthropologists, American Anthropological Association
2017-2018	Site Committee Member, Latino Studies Biennial Conference, Washington D.C.
2016	Grant Application Reviewer, National Endowment for the Humanities
2015-2020	Steering Committee Member, Religion in the Latino/a Americas Unit, American Academy of Religion
2011-2012	Scholarly Advisory Team, <i>Our American Journey Project</i> , Smithsonian National Museum of American History
2009	Acquisitions Team Member, <i>Latino Clothing and Identity Project</i> , Smithsonian National Museum of American History

Media (selection)

[Glitz and history at the border: Laredo throws George Washington at party.](#) *Washington Post*, February 22, 2025.

¡Viva George! Book Discussion, *Frontera Radio*, February 24, 2021.

[¡Viva George! Why Does Laredo Go Gaga For Washington?](#) *Texas Public Radio*, January 14, 2021.

[At the Border, a George Washington's Birthday Bash.](#) *GW Today*, February 9, 2021.

“Descifra Tradición” *El Mañana*, October 27, 2019.

<https://elmanana.com.mx/eimpresas/ings/edimpresas/20191027/20191027-E-06-C.PDF>

“The Border Ball” *GW Magazine*, Summer 2019. <http://magazine.gwu.edu/the-border-ball>

Interview. Entangled Worlds Project: “Sovereignty, Sanctities and Soil,” University of Toronto. May 22, 2019 <https://entangledworlds.utoronto.ca/index.php/interview-with-elaine-a-pena/>

“Hispanic Population Growth in Washington D.C.,” *NBC4*, Washington D.C. Oct. 4, 2014.

“Guadalupanos en Chicago, IL EE.UU.,” *Espacio Alternativo*, XHNOE-FM 91.3, Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas (Mexico), Sept. 28, 2013.

“Debates on Immigration and Latino Identity.” Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Nov. 2011. <https://youtu.be/dcen34lBduY>

“Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe” *Texas Public Radio*, Dec. 11, 20 2011.

“Santería and Curandismo in Washington DC.” *Washington Post*, July 2010.

“Reforma inmigratoria en EE.UU.” *CNN en Español*, Mar. 2010.

“Latinas in Higher Education.” *Texas Public Radio*, Sept. 29, 2006.

Professional Associations

American Anthropological Association (AAA)

American Academy of Religion (AAR)

Association of Borderlands Studies (ABS)

American Studies Association (ASA)

Latina/o Studies Association (LSA)

African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE)

Languages

English (native speaker), Spanish (fluent), French (A1)