During the summer of 2011, Arianna Taboada, (MPH, School of Public Health and School of Social Work,) was awarded a Latino Migration Program grant to study at Mexico’s National Institute of Public Health. The program focused on social determinants of health, globalization and health, and gender as related to migration. Taboada completed classroom-based and interactive work and conducted several case studies in order to produce practical solutions. At the end, she developed her own case study to be used in training settings on issues related to family violence, legal documentation and patient protection. Taboada’s experience in Mexico expanded her knowledge of theoretical concepts in the global health and migration field. She returned determined to help create in the U.S. a similar conversation that is globally mindful and human-rights oriented.

By collaboratively coordinating the UNC-Duke Consortium in Latin American and Caribbean Studies Working Group on Reproductive Justice and Migration in the Americas, Taboada has used the knowledge and experiences gained in Mexico to connect with other scholars passionate about changing the current legally-focused discourse of migration to one that focuses on human rights and reproductive justice. The working group has also been able to achieve its mission of building cross-cultural relationships between Latin American and U.S. researchers through the connections that Taboada made with pioneers in the fields of globalization and health. On January 26-27th, the working group will host a conference that will include two public lectures with experts from Mexico’s National Institute of Public Health. A seminar and film screening will highlight the experience of Central American migrants in transit through Mexico. The working group will continue to hold seminars throughout the year in order to foster dialogue between individuals interested in pursuing new research projects and engaging in in-depth discussions.

“My time at the Institute reiterated the need to expand the ‘migration debate’ into a regional discussion, and stay away from the North-South paradigm that is often the framework used in U.S. institutions.”

Kia Caldwell, Associate Professor of African and Afro-American Studies at UNC, will discuss *The Racial Politics of Health in Post-“Racial Democracy” Brazil* on March 19 at the FedEx Global Education Center, Room 4003, 5:30pm.

The Yucatec Maya Summer Institute celebrates its 20th year offering students language training opportunities in the Yucatan Peninsula. For more information including funding options: http://isa.unc.edu/language-programs/yucatec-maya-institute.

Check out the new ISA website at: http://isa.unc.edu for information about upcoming grant deadlines, events, and other opportunities.
Brendan Jamal Thornton is a cultural anthropologist and scholar of Caribbean religion. He currently holds a position as Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He received his doctorate degree in 2011 from the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Thornton’s ongoing ethnographic research in the Caribbean is concerned with the social and cultural politics of belief and the role religious identity plays in impoverished urban communities. His dissertation, The Cultural Politics of Evangelical Christianity in the Dominican Republic, gives an account of Pentecostal experience and identity in the town of Villa Altagracia. His current book project is an outgrowth of this work and explores the ways in which Pentecostal Christians derive meaning, recognition and authority in the context of religious heterodoxy and Catholic cultural supremacy. Dr. Thornton will be presenting his work on April 2nd at 5:30pm at the GEC, Room 4003.

Student Excellence

Ana Cabello de la Garza (Latin American Studies, 2013) served as an intern at the United States Embassy in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic during summer 2011. She was stationed at the Department of Agriculture desk working on matters concerning animal and plant health and their impact on human health. Her project focused on developing guidelines for communication between multiple government offices and stakeholders in order to facilitate, improve and ensure the well-being of farmers and livestock. Her field study taught her the need for the implementation of participatory, sustainable projects where stakeholders are provided with resources and skills to advocate for themselves and their communities.

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