EMR ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



The Committee on Ethnicity, Migration, Rights

Faculty of Arts & Sciences, Harvard University

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



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This has been a momentous year, shaped by uncertainty and disruption across the globe, the United States, and within our own institution. Each of EMR's core areas - ethnicity, migration, rights, and Indigeneity - has faced real challenges. Yet it is in these moments that the strength, resilience, and relevance of the EMR community have stood out most clearly. As we wrap up the academic year, I want to acknowledge the difficulties we have faced. But more importantly, I want to take a moment to celebrate what we have accomplished together. And there is much to celebrate.

EMR continues to be a vibrant academic community within the Division of Arts and Humanities, offering a secondary field where students engage in sustained, interdisciplinary study of ethnicity, migration, Indigeneity, and human rights. While our early focus was primarily on the United States, since 2020 we have taken a more global approach, embracing comparative ethnic studies, transnational migration, border studies, and global Indigeneity. Our students are deeply invested in these evolving questions and the comparative frameworks we offer for understanding them.

We are proud to be the most enrolled secondary field in the Arts and Humanities, and seventh across the entire college. This year, we continued to grow with the introduction of many new and challenging courses, all of which reflect our ongoing commitment to interdisciplinary rigor and curricular diversity.

EMR received generous support for innovative teaching and research, including photography exhibits, guest speakers, interactive workshops, and projects exploring Afro-Latinx and culturally hybrid identities. I am deeply grateful for this investment in our work. I am also excited to share that EMR will be part of the Arts and Humanities Division's new initiative, *New Introductory Courses in the Humanities*. Our course *EMR 180: Introduction to Migration and Border Studies* will be one of nine inaugural offerings in Spring 2026.

I am grateful to our dedicated faculty, and appreciate their time, expertise, and creativity. To our secondary field students, whether you are new to the program or have been with us for years, I am so glad you are here. And to the Class of 2025, congratulations! I am proud of all you have accomplished and excited for what comes next. I also want to recognize the outstanding work of our staff - Genevieve Butler, Leslie Fernandez, Fatimah Mateen, Gerlinde Munshi, and Carissa Woolf-Makover - whose care, coordination, and support help keep our program thriving. I also appreciate the dedication and insight of our Faculty Advisory Committee, whose guidance continues to strengthen our mission. And thank you as well to Jenny, who thoughtfully takes care of our spaces at 1100 Mass Ave.

This year's growth would not have been possible without the generous collaboration and support of so many across campus, including the Harvard Art Museums, the Asia Center, the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, donors to the EMR Fund, the Elson Family Arts Initiative Fund, the Mahindra Humanities Center, the Provostial Fund for the Arts and Humanities, the Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative, the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations, the Harvard University Native American Program, the Observatorio Cervantes, and the Committee on Degrees in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. I am especially thankful to the Office of the Dean of Arts and Humanities and to Dean Sean Kelly for their ongoing encouragement and support. To our entire community, thank you for being part of this remarkable and meaningful year. I look forward to what we'll continue to build and discover together.

I am thrilled to now call 1100 Mass Ave our new home. The space includes a student study area, a lending library, and rotating exhibits that showcase EMR-related research and artistic expression. I warmly invite you to stop by to visit an exhibit, browse the shelves, or simply spend time in the vibrant and welcoming community that makes EMR so special.

With gratitude,

Raquel Vega-Durán EMR Faculty Chair

EMR NEWS

Welcoming New (& Returning) Staff



Gerlinde Munshi (she/her) started to serve as Program Manager for EMR in July 2024 providing administrative support as part of the Arts & Humanities Administrative Services Group (AHAS). She has enjoyed working at EMR tremendously and is looking forward to the upcoming year. Prior to coming to FAS, she worked at the Harvard School of Public Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Her formal training is in Program Evaluation, a data-based decision-making framework that guides her approach to administration and management. In her free time she enjoys hiking, biking, and everything in the great outdoors.



Carissa Woolf-Makover (she/her) joined Harvard in November 2024 as a Coordinator in the Division of Arts & Sciences Administrative Services Group (AHAS). Prior to that, she spent seven years in the Jewish nonprofit sector, where she managed large grant portfolios, planned and coordinated events, and provided support to directors and managers—primarily in the areas of inclusion and the arts. Carissa holds a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management from the University of Connecticut and a Bachelor's degree in Communications from Lasell University. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two cats, performing in musical theater, hiking, cooking and baking new things.

We have been delighted to have her during Fatimah Mateen's parental leave this academic year, as well as to have been her first colleagues at Harvard. Thank you, Carissa, we will miss you!

Fatimah Mateen (she/her), our Finance & Operations Coordinator, welcome back to EMR!

So happy to be back at EMR after a few months away following the birth of my daughter, Laila. Very grateful for the entire EMR team and Carissa for making my time away so special and my return so smooth.--F.M.

EMR in the News & New Initiatives

EMR faculty appeared in several campus news stories in AY 2024-2025! EMR course instructors **Aitor Bouso-Gavin**, **Andi Remoquillo** (with us for Spring 2025), EMR Program Director **Leslie J. Fernandez** and Faculty Chair **Raquel Vega-Durán** appeared in the following news articles.





Chen, S. (2025, March 6). **Fifteen Questions: Leslie Fernandez on Techno-Orientalism, AI Ethics, and an Ethnic Studies Concentration.** *Harvard Crimson*.

Lin, J. & Mahajan, A.S. (2025, February 27). **Time-Capped Faculty, in Their Own Words.** *Harvard Crimson.*

Cassidy, E.P. & Jeon, C. (2025, April 17). Arts & Humanities Division Pushes Forward with New Intro Course Initiative. *Harvard Crimson*.

O'Grady, E. (2025, May 7). **Hooking First Years on the Arts and Humanities.** *Harvard Gazette*.





Aitor Bouso-Gavin has launched a new initiative in Afro-Latinx Studies. As part of this effort, he organized two major public events during the 2024–2025 academic year, featuring critically acclaimed Morocco-based Puerto Rican poet **Victor Hernández Cruz** and Afro-Cuban-American artist **Juana Valdez**. Both guests engaged students and faculty in thought-provoking discussions and presentations.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Aitor Bouso-Gavin (he, him) had an extremely productive first year as Lecturer in Latinx Studies at EMR! He taught four courses this AY: *EMR 1010: Topics in Latinx Studies: LatinX Literature & Visual Arts; EMR 166: Queer Interventions in LatinX Studies; EMR 167: Critical Afro-LatinX Studies in the US, and EMR 170: Decolonial Healing in LatinX Literature & Visual Arts; served as faculty advisor to EMR's Latinx Studies Working Group (LSWG); and launched his new Afro-Latinx Studies Initiative (see page 3).*

Leslie J. Fernandez (they/them), Lecturer in Asian American Studies and EMR Program Director, reprised *EMR 157: Techno-Orientalism: Asia, Technology, Futurity* in Fall 2024. This time around, the course included a visit by Takeo Rivera (Boston University) who was also with us for our Fall EMR Scholars seminar. EMR 157 finished with a lot of creative final projects, including video essays, poetry, plays, a video game, and even pottery! Leslie also advised Harvard TAPAS (Task Force for Asian American Progressive Advocacy and Studies), and joined with students at the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) Annual Conference, this year in Boston (pictured at right).



At the Association of Asian American Studies Annual Meeting in Boston.>



Mandy Izadi (she/her), Lecturer in American & Indigenous Studies, taught EMR 1030: Topics in Native American & Indigenous Studies and EMR 158: Land, Labor, and the Color Line: New Perspectives on Black and Indigenous Histories, both in Fall 2024. Dually appointed to History & Literature, Mandy also taught HL90HB: Indigenous Economies & Environments in Spring 2025. One special event Mandy organized in this year was a visit from Ben Yahola and his College of Muscogee Nation students who spoke on surviving the boarding school system.

Raquel Vega-Durán (she/her), EMR Faculty Chair and Senior Lecturer in Peninsular and Transatlantic Film and Literature in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, taught *EMR 168: Narrating the Border: Migration and Media* in Spring 2025. Co-taught by the award-winning photojournalist **Kirsten Luce**, this interdisciplinary course explored how photojournalism shapes our understanding of borders and migration. Students examined media narratives across local and global contexts, from Greater Boston to the US-Mexico border, Africa, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Europe.

A highlight of the course was meeting leading journalists, scholars, and Pulitzer Prize-winning photographers, including Nick Miroff, Annie Correal, Johnny Harris, Gabriel Cardenas, John Moore, and scholar Dohra Ahmad. These sessions offered firsthand insight into the ethics and impact of migration reporting. Students participated in a photography workshop series, conducted interviews with individuals impacted by migration systems, created the collaborative magazine *One City. Divided.*, and curated a final photography exhibit exploring world borders. Through these immersive experiences, they developed a nuanced understanding of how migration is shaped and mediated by visual storytelling.

This course was made possible thanks to the generous support of The Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative, the Provostial Fund for the Arts and Humanities, and the Elson Family Arts Initiative Fund.



^ Narrating the Border: Visual Perspectives exhibit at EMR's new gallery space at 1100 Mass Ave; and right, cover images from One City. Divided., the collaborative magazine EMR 168 students produced.





Extra Spring 2025 Courses

For Spring 2025 we were able to add courses to replace the three Asian American Studies courses Leslie J. Fernandez was released from after accepting the position of EMR Program Director in July 2024. It was a pleasure to welcome Andi Remoquillo from History & Literature; Jung Choi from Women, Gender & Sexuality; Lewis D'Avigdor, a recent Cornell PhD; as well as having Warren Fellows Jacinda Tran and Soham Patel for a second spring with us.



Andi Remoquillo, a Lecturer in History & Literature taught *EMR 172: Space, Place, Belonging: (Re) Locating the Asian/American Experience*, and is most proud of the kind of academically rigorous yet compassionate community that the students fostered from the beginning to end of the semester—"in this space I witnessed a tremendous amount of openness, trust, and concern for one another... to draw connections between the academic, personal, and political; to hold space for each other during intellectual and interpersonal conversations... I feel privileged to have been able to work with such a wonderful group for my very first EMR class."

Jacinda Tran, a Warren Fellow teaching in her second (and sadly last) year with EMR, introduced another new course, *EMR 169: War Ecologies*, and had two guest speakers—Adrian de Leon and Keva Bui—discuss their works. They visited the Peabody Museum, where James Walkingstick ('23, and EMR Secondary Fielder Alum) shared personal and institutional stories about cultural extraction, and Special Collections, where Blake Spitz presented some archival documents about Harvard's contributions to Vietnam War innovations and resistance.

Kimchi from an EMR 171 final project. >



Jung Choi joined EMR from the Department of Women, Gender & Sexuality to teach EMR 171: Korean and Korean American Literature, Media, and Culture. As part of the course, she hosted guest speakers Director Minki Hong and Producer Todd Henry of the film Paradise, a documentary exploring gay urban life in South Korea during the 1970s and 1980s. Students also viewed the film Wave after Wave: Domestic Violence in the Korean-American Community, followed by a discussion on how Korean American women across generations experience gender-based violence.



Lewis D'Avigdor taught EMR 173: Indigeneity Against Settler Colonialism, which explored the history and theory of Indigenous resurgence in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US. He arranged several inclass screenings, including one from John Harvey's documentary Still We Rise and Soda Jerk's Terror Nullius. The class also enjoyed the Peabody Museum in a tour led by EMR alumnus James Walkingstick. Students explored their own disciplinary interests creating a range of final projects, from Indigenous post-apocalyptic fiction, to ethnographies of Kashmir, Canadian legal analysis, and podcasts featuring renowned Indigenous education specialists.

Soham Patel taught his highly popular seminar *EMR 164:* Global Rebellion: Race, Solidarity, Decolonization, for the second time. As a Warren Fellow, we were thrilled to offer Soham's course again this spring, especially after its initial enrollment far exceeded expectations. We wish him all the best in his new role as Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

EMR Scholars

The EMR Scholars program brings together students with diverse backgrounds, interests, and concentrations for deep academic engagement with an invited scholar. This program is perhaps the most emblematic of EMR's interdisciplinary nature that we are so proud of. Each semester, we invite a seminar leader who designs a workshop on a topic we think will inspire our undergraduate community, and interested students apply to participate.

Our Fall 2024 offering was "Model Minority Masochism and the Cultural Politics of Resentment," led by **Takeo Rivera** (Boston University). The seminar considered his recent monograph: *Model Minority Masochism* (2022, Oxford University Press).

The Spring 2025 cohort met with **Dohra Ahmad** (St. John's College), and learned about "The Ins and Outs of Literary Anthologies," with her *Penguin Book of Migration Literature* and *Rotten English* serving as the exemplary texts.





Working Group Highlights

EMR provides additional co-curricular academic enrichment and leadership opportunities through our working groups in Asian American & Pacific Islander Studies, Latinx Studies, Muslim American Studies, and Dissertation Writing.

The **AAPISWG**, this year coordinated by **Kiani Akina** ('25, an EMR Secondary Fielder and Thesis Prize Honorable Mention Winner) and **Woohee Kim** (HGSE), organized a series of successful events including a very well-attended Fall Kickoff Event (pictured at top-right), a writing workshop ahead of the Association of Asian American Studies conference (this year in Boston), and a reading group considering the collection of Pacific Islander speculative fiction, *Snaring New Suns* (Bamboo Ridge Press, 2022).

LSWG Coordinators for the academic year included **Andrew Suarez** (American Studies PhD candidate) and **Fatima Mendoza** ('26) in the fall semester, followed by Mendoza and **Ashley Rodriguez Lantigua** (HDS) in the spring. Together, they helped sustain a vital space for co-curricular networking and community engagement. From Latinx Heritage Month celebrations in October to an Archival Workshop at the Schlesinger Library in April, the LSWG hosted a vibrant array of enriching events throughout the year. We are grateful for the generous sponsorship of Observatorio Cervantes, whose support makes LSWG activities possible.

Maryam Tourk ('25, EMR Secondary Fielder and Thesis Prize Honorable Mention Winner) did excellent work steering the **MASWG** this year, including a major screening of the recent documentary, "American Muslims: A History Revealed," and a thoughtful discussion with the filmmakers and Harvard Historian **Vincent Brown**.

Ten graduate students participated in the **EMR Dissertation Writing Group**, led by EMR Program Director **Leslie J. Fernandez** with about half completing this year.



<9/20 AAPISWG Fall Kickoff event. Pictured is Kiani Akina ('25, an EMR Secondary Fielder and EMR Thesis Prize Honorable Mention Winner) welcoming



< 4/4 LSWG Spring Kickoff event including Latinx graduate students from several Harvard Schools who led a panel discusssion about their research and experiences. At center, left, is Fatima Mendoza ('26) and Ashley Rodriguez Langtigua (HDS), LSWG Coordinators for the Spring 2025 semester.



< 11/21 MASWG American Muslims screening. Pictured, at center, are Aneesa Roidad (25, and EMR Thesis Prize Honorable Mention Winner) and Maryam Tourk (25, EMR Secondary Fielder and EMR Thesis Prize Winner).

EMR's **Student Advisory Committee (SAC)** also met twice this year and provided valuable insight as we worked toward submitting our Concentration Proposal in February.













Abbreviations:

AAPISWG=Asian American Studies Working Group; DRCLAS=David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies; HUNAP=Harvard Native American Program; LSWG=Latinx Studies Working Group; MAS-WG=Muslim American Studies Working Group.



OCTOBER 3RD













Archival Workshop at Schlesinger Library

88 88 88



FEB 14, 2025 12 PM - 4 PM

EMR W









EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Events in **bold** indicate instances where EMR had primary responsibility.

- 09/11 EMR Fall Open House
- 09/20 EMR Asian American & Pacific Islander Studies Working Group (AAPISWG) Fall Kickoff
- 09/28 Harvard Powwow
- 10/02 Mariachi Veritas X EMR

Generously supported by Observatorio Cervantes.

- 10/03 EMR Asian American & Pacific Islander Studies Working Group (AAPISWG) Writing Workshop
- 10/07 EMR Student Advisory Council (SAC) Meeting
- 10/08 Almost American Screening & Discussion

Co-sponsors: Harvard Foundation; Dept. of Romance Languages & Literatures (RLL)'; the Mass. TPS (Temporary Protected Status) Committee/Natl.TPS Alliance; Harvard College Act on a Dream; David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS); Concilio Latino; Harvard Nepali Student Assoc.; Harvard-Radcliffe Raza.

10/11 EMR Latinx Studies Working Group (LSWG) Social Mixer

Generously supported by Observatorio Cervantes.

10/29 Corky Lee's Asian America: A Panel Discussion w/ Prof. Mae Ngai & Activist Virgo Lee About the Legacy of Photographer Corky Lee.

Co-hosts: Erika Lee (Harvard), Emma Teng (MIT); co-sponsors: Harvard Asia Center; Harvard & MIT History Depts.

10/31 Dia de los Muertos: Queer & Feminist Focused Altar Opening "Day of the Dead in Mexico" talk w/ Prof. Maria Parra-Velasco (Harvard RLL)

Generously supported by Observatorio Cervantes.

11/12 Which Side Are You On? A Tohono O'odham Life Across Borders, w/ Jose Antonio Lucero (U Washington) & Mike Wilson.

Co-sponsors: Mahindra Humanities Center, DRCLAS & the Harvard University Native American Program (HUNAP).

11/18 Cooking Demo w/ James Beard Award-Winner Chef Sherry Pocknett.

Co-sponsors: Harvard Foundation & HUNAP.

- 11/21 EMR Muslim American Studies Working Group (MASWG) Screening of American Muslims
- 12/09 EMR Long Day Against Procrastination
- 02/07 EMR Student Advisory Council (SAC) Meeting
- 02/14 All About Love Valentine's Bracelet & Card-Making

Co-sponsors: Harvard Foundation & HUNAP.

- 02/25 EMR Concentration Proposal Talk w/Seniors
- 02/28 EMR Latinx Studies Working Group (LSWG) Spring Kickoff & Grad Student Panel

Generously supported by Observatorio Cervantes.

- 02/28 EMR Asian American & Pacific Islander Studies Working Group (AAPISWG) Spring Accountability Hours
- 03/04 Evening w/Victor Hernández Cruz

The first of Afro-Latinx Studies Initiative series coordinated by Aitor Bouso-Gavin, generously co-sponsored by the Provostial Fund for the Arts & Sciences, and the History Dept.

03/04 Finger Weaving Workshop w/Aquinnah Wampanoag Artist Elizabeth James-Perry.

Co-sponsors: Natives at Harvard College, HUNAP, Office for the Arts & Harvard College Women's Center (HCWC).

04/04 "I Am Trying to Remember," an M.DIV* Thesis Show by Renee Susanto

* Master's in Divinity. Renee has been an EMR Intern since 2023. Congratulations on your graduation, Renee!

04/04 EMR Latinx Studies Working Group (LSWG) Archival Workshop

Generously supported by Observatorio Cervantes

04/25 Drawn to Earth: Contemporary Art & Environment in the Americas @ Harvard Art Museum

Co-sponsor: Concilio Latino.

04/28 Afro Latinx Art: Artist Talk w/Juana Valdés & Conversation w/Prof. Adriana Zavala (Tufts U & US Latinx Art Forum Executive Director)

The final Afro-Latinx Studies Initiative series event coordinated by Aitor Bouso-Gavin & generously co-sponsored by the Provostial Fund for the Arts & Humanities.

04/29 Chinatown Rising and Q&A w/Josh Chuck

Generously supported by the Harvard Asia Center.

05/05 Study and Celebrate @ EMR

EMR THESIS PRIZE WINNERS

The Senior Thesis Prize in Ethnicity, Migration, Rights recognizes projects that contribute to current scholarly discourses about ethnicity, migration, Indigeneity, race, and/or rights.



Maryam Tourk, Winner

"Censored Subjects Speak Back: Mythmaking, Militarization, & Modalities of Control in South Asia"



Kiani Akina, Honorable Mention

"O ke kahua ma mua, ma hope ke k ūkulu: A Framework for Ike Āina Policy in Hawaii's K-12 Public Schools"



Aneesa Roidad, Honorable Mention

"Welcome To Berkeley/You are On Indian Land: The People's Park Occupation and the Occupation of Alcatraz, 1969-2024"

SUMMER THESIS RESEARCH GRANT WINNERS

Summer thesis research grants are generously supported by donors to the EMR Fund and the Observatorio Cervantes at Harvard University. We are enormously grateful to those who make these opportunities possible. To follow are titles of year's EMR Summer Thesis Research Grant Winners' proposed projects.



Kashish Bastola "American Gurkhas: Locating Nepalis in US Empire"



Laurinne Eugenio"Icons On Wheels: The Jeepneys
Journey Through History and Its
Fight for Survival"



Dulce Gonzalez Arias"Untold Stories of the San Fernando
Valley: How Latino Immigrants
Transformed America's White Suburb"



Sophie Goodman"Discrepancies, Discretion &
Disillusionment in the U Visa Process"



Leslie Nevarez"Comparing the Impact of Migrant Protection Protocols on Healthcare Access in Brownsville & San Diego"



Amber Nolazco-Torres
"Impacts of Organized Crime on
Educational Attainment in Rural
Sinaloa"



Kaitlyn Tran"Ideas of Decolonization:
Vietnamese Revolutionaries and
Black Radicals in the late 1960s"



Katherine Villanueva"Violence Against Women in Mexico:
The Social & Political Landscape
Connecting to US Migration"



Kawsar Yasin"An Ethnographic Study of Uyghur Women in Istanbul"



Rebecca Zhang
"Who is the Asian American
Student?: An Ethnographic Project
on Asian American High School
Student Identity"

EMR GIFT FUND

EMR welcomes donations to our Gift Fund to support our programming. The gift fund is used to supplement our cosponsoring and organizing of events and other activities for students. The fund allows us to cover expenses for important and pertinent events that might exceed the bounds of our annual budget. To donate, go to the Harvard College online giving form, choose "Other" and enter "Ethnicity, Migration, Rights Fund" in the box for the fund name or on your paper contribution form.

https://tinyurl.com/EMR-Fund



EMR PEOPLE

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR EMR SECONDARY FIELDERS!

Thirty-two of the Class of 2025 graduated with Secondary Certificates from EMR this year! At right are a few of them. Congratulations to all!









2024-2025 EMR FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sean Kelly

Arts & Humanities Division Dean

Raquel Vega-Durán

EMR Faculty Chair

Eram Alam

(History of Science)

Philip Deloria

(History)

Lauren Kaminsky

(History & Literature)

Matthew Liebmann

(Anthropology)

Alejandro Madrid

(Music)

Carola Suarez-Orozco

(HGSE)

Paulina L. Alberto

(AAAS and History)

Sarah Dryden-Peterson

(HGSE)

Erika Lee

(History)

Annette Damayanti Lienau

(Comparative Literature)

María Luisa Parra-Velasco

(RLL)

Philip Torrey

(Law School)

Bruno Carvalho

(RLL and AAAS)

Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof

(History)

Taeku Lee

(Government)

Caroline Light

(WGS)

Malavika Reddy

(Anthropology)

EMR ADMINISTRATION

Raquel Vega-Durán

EMR Faculty Chair

Leslie J. Fernandez

Program Director & Lecturer in Asian American Studies

Genevieve Butler

Academic Programs Coordinator

Gerlinde Munshi

Program Manager

Fatimah Mateen

Finance and Operations Coordinator



The Committee on Ethnicity, Migration, Rights Faculty of Arts & Sciences, Harvard University

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