

Latin American Studies Center
Annual Student Conference
University of Maryland, College Park
May 4-5, 2017

Sanctuary, Refuge, Oasis

We construct sanctuary—refuge, protection, and safety—in times of trouble. Sanctuary may mean escape from political or religious persecution or protection from environmental disaster. It may be sacred or secular, underground or overtly revolutionary. It may be a physical space or part of our consciousness and dreams for the future, a state of being or promise of utopia. Sanctuary is often very real, but it is also artistic and poetic, taking shape with our imaginations. Sanctuary suggests that crisis will be overcome, the vulnerable protected, the newly dead guided to the beyond. However, it may also indicate that danger is imminent and that we risk everything by leaving its confines – be it spatial or ideological. Grave consequences sometimes occur if we cannot reach its borders or if its borders are breached from the outside. Certain conditions are crucial for successful refuge, including mercy, altruism, hospitality, empathy, and alliance.

Latin America and the Caribbean have long histories of sanctuary, *santuario*, or *sanctuaire* in religious, political, social, and environmental contexts. For centuries, dissidents have fled to alternative worlds or have stayed put to fight and built new ones. Inclusion and exclusion define cultural and national identities and communities, yet the boundaries they determine are continually disputed and in flux: Who is in, who is out? Who or what is legal and legitimate, illegal or illicit, sacred or profane? Who defines spaces of sanctuary and controls the bodies and minds flowing between them? Who would we take in and harbor in our own homes if asked? And how do fear and hope drive our actions?

The 2017 LASC student conference invites presentations that examine these questions and those related. We invite participants to explore elements of the theme through concepts, practices, and problems in Latin America, the Caribbean, and among Latin Americans and Latina/o/x living in the United States or anywhere else in the world. As a trans-disciplinary center, the Latin American Studies Center encourages proposals that cross-methodological and analytical boundaries. We ask participants to consider how the proposed paper, panel, or creative project might relate generally to the theme of sanctuary in order to generate a common conversation about the great variety of viewpoints that will be presented.

General topics that relate to theme (but not all):

- definitions of terms (sanctuary, refuge, asylum, etc.) in different contexts
- danger, precarity, risk, peril, dystopia
- imprisonment, sequestration
- flight, return, escape

fantasy, alternative social realities, utopia
artistic visions and poetic representations
resistance, activism, revolution, social movements
fixity, mobility, permanence, transience
borders, boundaries, walls, fronteras
oasis, shelter, wilderness
environment, ecology
law and social justice
refuge formed through racial or ethnic communities
displacement, immigration, emigration
gender and sexual identity, queer communities
definitions, development, or destruction of “safe spaces”
feminism, postcolonial, subaltern
class, economic oppression and transformation
nation, nationalism, national identity
religion, belief, spirituality, temple, church, mosque
intellectual, academic, and/or personal freedom

Please submit abstracts of approximately 250 words, proposing individual paper presentations, panels, posters, performances, or other creative formats, by **March 10, 2017**, to the Latin American Studies Center at the University of Maryland, **LASC@umd.edu**. We welcome contributions in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, or Creole. Submissions must include:

- name and contact information
- institution, department, your current degree program (BA, MA, MFA, PhD)
- email address and phone number
- AV needs
- form of presentation (presented text, performed, displayed)
- creative work should include a short sample from an original composition or description of intended work

Questions may be sent to the Director of the Latin American Studies Center, Dr. Laurie Frederik, Lfred@umd.edu, or graduate assistant, Sabrina Gonzalez, LASC@umd.edu. For more information about the LASC or the University of Maryland, see www.lasc.umd.edu and www.umd.edu, as well as our facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/UMDLASC>.

** One additional goal of the conference is to harness the ideas generated by sharing knowledge against the backdrop of our rapidly changing sociopolitical landscape. Real-time outcomes of the event might include calls or plans for collective and individual action to positively affect our campus, higher education, and our communities.*