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Monitor Newsletter March 29, 2010

Bowling Green State University

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BGSU scholar examines roots of underdevelopment in Mexico

It is hard to imagine today that during the mid-18th century Mexico was in about the same state of economic and human development as today's developed nations. What happened to hinder its development while others were surging ahead?

Dr. Amilcar Challu, history, has received a \$50,400 fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities to study the historical origins of Mexico's underdevelopment from the vantage point of how the country coped with food crises in the decades preceding its independence. The funding for "The Political Economy of Hunger in Bourbon Mexico, 1730-1820" will enable him to focus entirely on research and writing next academic year.

While there were many factors involved in Mexico's failure to develop, Challu argues that a "major decline in accessibility to food" is a key element. This brought about a decline in living standards, an unprecedented rise in inequality and a "political and socioeconomic crisis" that still reverberates in today's Mexico.

Historically, much land had been communally owned by indigenous people, and commercial, private agriculture was relatively marginal, Challu explained. But over the eighteenth century, this balance changed. Population grew, and so did mining and other economic activities that increased the demand for grain. Corn was both the staple in the Mexican diet and the fodder of mules, which at that time virtually powered the entire economy, from grinding ore to extracting silver to moving freight across Mexico's mountainous geography. As a result, the growth in the demand for food outpaced supply.

Prices went up and commercial agriculture became very profitable. Wealthy landowners grabbed the best lands, displacing self-sufficient, small producers. Markets developed to get food to consumers. This was good for relatively affluent consumers and commercial farmers, but put pressure on the impoverished people in rural areas who increasingly relied on the market to acquire the food to which they were traditionally entitled. When a threat to food security was perceived, such as a summer drought or a frost in October, regions tended to hold onto their food supplies, prices spiraled up and the entire supply network was affected. Food shortages led to disease and further deterioration of the population.

This confluence of events increased inequality and restrained Mexico from capitalizing on the opportunities for development that other countries were starting to experience, Challu said. Around 1800 and for the first time in its history, he concluded, Mexico had lower standards of living and higher inequality than Western Europe, and this story is intrinsically connected to dramatic changes in access to food in the eighteenth century.

Challu sees parallels today with the effects of trade agreements such as NAFTA, which, while benefitting some sectors of a population, can be devastating to others. Similarly, the recent competition in the use of crops for food or energetic use, and the rise in grain prices that has triggered, reverberates with the historical experience. "Present-day issues prompted me to talk about this in historical terms," he said.

Blair to make case for new model of scholarly communication

It's time for colleges and universities to catch up with the digital age in terms of sharing scholarship and rewarding faculty for publishing in other venues besides traditional print, says Dr. Kristine Blair, chair of the English department and the editor of an online journal.

As the next speaker in the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Faculty Series, Blair will make the case for transformation in both the accessing and dissemination of scholarship

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in "Twittering Our Way toward Tenure?: The Politics of Scholarly Communication in a Digital Age" at 4 p.m. Wednesday (March 31) in 206 Bowen-Thompson Student Union. A reception will follow.

In this "open-source, multimodal era of Web 2.0," Blair asserts, it is unreasonable for higher education institutions to cling to reward and incentive structures that favor print models of scholarly production, especially when these same institutions are relying heavily on a range of technologies to recruit and retain students. Blair calls for the training of current and future faculty to produce, distribute and showcase scholarship in such genres as digital dissertations and electronic portfolios.

IN BRIEF**Showcase features championship debate performances**

The University's nationally acclaimed Speech and Debate Team will show off this year's championship performances in a special showcase of champions. The event is at 7 p.m. Wednesday (March 31) in the McFall Center Gallery.

The Pi Kappa Delta National Communication Honorary currently ranks the BGSU Forensics, Speech and Debate Team second in the nation. Forensics, Speech and Debate is a co-curricular, competitive activity offered through the Department of Communication to any BGSU undergraduate in good academic standing.

Students, with the help of an experienced coaching staff, prepare speeches, debates and interpretive performances. They compete against similar students from other academic institutions. Team members have a variety of experience levels, from those wishing to advance their speaking skills, to seasoned public speaking competitors.

CALENDAR**Monday, March 29**

Architecture Lecture Series, featuring Monica Ponce de Leon, dean, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan, and principal, Office dA design firm, 6:30 p.m., Bowen-Thompson Student Union Theater. Sponsored by the American Institute of Architecture Students.

Partners in Excellence Meeting, closing reception and assessment, 7:30 p.m., 101 Olscamp Hall. Hosted by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Guest Artists Recital, with duo pianists Pierre Van der Westhuizen and Sophie Grobler, Heidelberg University, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Tuesday, March 30

Tuesday Night Film Series, "Snow Angels" (U.S., 2008), 7:30 p.m., Gish Film Theater, Hanna Hall.

Guest Artist Recital, with violinist Spyros Gkykontis and pianist Elena Petridou, Ionian

University, Greece, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Dissertation Defense, "Femtosecond Dynamics of Small Polyatomic Molecules in Solution: A Combined Experimental and Computational Approach," Patrick Z. El-Khoury, photochemical sciences, 11 a.m., 132 Overman Hall.

Wednesday, March 31

Master Class, with violinist Spyros Gkykontis, Ionian University, 11:30 a.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Brown Bag Series, 12th annual Bring Your Favorite Professor/Mentor to Lunch, noon-1 p.m., Women's Center, 107 Hanna Hall.

Tornado Safety Training, 2-3 p.m., 2 College Park. To register, visit <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/envhs/page22440.html> or call 2-2171. Presented by Environmental Health and Safety.

Biology Seminar Series, "Photosynthetic Microorganisms in Permanently Cold Envi-

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ronments," presented by Dr. Rachel Morgan-Kiss, Miami University, 3:30-4:30 p.m., 112 Life Sciences Building.

College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Faculty Lecture, "Twittering Our Way toward Tenure? The Politics of Communication in the Digital Age," with Dr. Kristine Blair, chair of the English department, 4 p.m., 206 Union. Reception to follow.

Faculty Scholar Series, "A Creative History: Shostakovich's Sketches for Symphonies No. 8 and 10" with Dr. Laura Kennedy, musicology, and "Teaching Singing: Science Meets the Art at BGSU" with Dr. Ronald Scherer, communication disorders, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Thursday, April 1

Fulbright Lecture, "Seeking Justice at Guantanamo and After: Stories of the Trials of Moroccan Detainees," with Fulbright Scholar Dr. Abdelaziz Nouaydi; followed by a question and answer period, 7 p.m., Union Theater. Presented by the Department of Journalism and Public Relations and the Department of Political Science.

Alumnus Reading, with Melissa Fraterrigo, fiction writer, 7:30 p.m., Prout Chapel.

International Film Series, "След края на света (After the End of the World)" (Bulgaria, 2009), 7:30 p.m., Gish Film Theater, Hanna Hall.

Student Composers' Forum, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Friday, April 2

Women's Professional Development Series, "Finding a Positive Fit: Job and Internship Searches for LGBT Students and Their Allies," with Emily Wyatt, Career Center, 1:30-3 p.m., Women's Center, 107 Hanna Hall.

Saturday, April 3

Guest Artist Recital, by pianist Ning Yu, 2 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Duo Recital, with guest violinist Spyros Gkykontis and violist Vasile Beluska, musical arts, 8 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center.

Women's Softball vs. Eastern Michigan University, 2 p.m., Stellar Field.

Sunday, April 4

Sunday Matinees, "The Outlaw" (U.S., 1943) and "Dripalong Daffy," (U.S., 1951), featuring commentary by Dr. Jan Wahl, 3 p.m., Gish Film Theater, Hanna Hall.

Women's Softball vs. Eastern Michigan University, 1 p.m., Stellar Field.

Continuing Events Through April 3

BFA Senior Thesis Exhibit, Union Art Gallery, 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Sundays; Dorothy Uber Bryan and Willard Wankelman galleries, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 6-9 p.m. Thursday.

JOB POSTINGS

FACULTY

There were no jobs posted this week.

Labor Postings

<http://international.bgsu.edu/index.php?x=facinfohires>

Contact the Office of Human Resources at 419-372-8421 for information regarding classified and administrative positions. Position vacancy announcements may be viewed by visiting the HR Web site at <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/>.

Employees wishing to apply for these positions must sign a "Request for Transfer" form

and attach an updated resume or data sheet. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

CLASSIFIED

On-campus classified:

http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/BGSU_only/page11151.html

Off-campus classified:

http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/cl_staff/page11145.html

ADMINISTRATIVE

http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/adm_staff/page11137.html



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OBITUARY

There were no obituaries this week.