



# Center for Caribbean Studies Newsletter

Spring 2024

# Center for Caribbean Studies at Trinity College

The Center for Caribbean Studies explores and celebrates the distinctive Caribbean character of the city of Hartford and the influence of Caribbean civilization on contemporary cultures around the world. We conduct collaborative research and host cultural events and exchanges that build upon the region's transnational connections and help our students develop as engaged global citizens. Our scholarly focus is the broader Caribbean—the Greater and Lesser Antilles and coastal regions of Central and South America—and the fluid ties between the Hartford region and its diasporas, today and in historical context.

With financial support from the Center and the guidance of faculty who have deep connections to Caribbean culture and history, students pursue research, internships, and student-faculty scholarly projects on campus and abroad, independently and in collaboration with neighboring educational and cultural institutions.

The Center promotes new course development on the Caribbean in all academic disciplines and provides teaching and research grants to Trinity faculty working independently, in partnership, or in collaboration with members of the Hartford community.

The Caribbean region influences contemporary global cultures to an extraordinary and often unrecognized degree. It is home to peoples of Indigenous, European, African, Asian, and Middle Eastern heritage speaking a diverse range of languages, including English, Spanish, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Creole, Garifuna, and Papiamentu.



*Photos courtesy of Trinity College Communications*

# A welcome message

## CO-DIRECTORS

Welcome to the Center for Caribbean Studies Spring 2024 newsletter!

This was a productive and inspiring year for the Center beginning with the fall installations of our inaugural student researcher team and Visiting Scholar in Residence and culminating in a spring series of class talks and performances by the Warwick Gombey Troupe from Bermuda.

We are tremendously appreciative of the efforts of our [student researcher team](#), Jackie, Jenissa, Mafer, and Paola in helping us to reimagine how the Center might grow its institutional identity and impact in/beyond our campus with projects ranging from newsletter development and digital project publication to logo design and event photography.

Please stay tuned for website and email updates on initiatives and programming by the Center. We have just launched new website tabs featuring a research blog and a Caribbean course lists.

We look forward to continuing to support the work of Trinity faculty, students, and staff through our [grants and fellowships](#). We also welcome inquiries about new community collaborations.

Be in touch to join our [affiliated faculty list](#) and make recommendations to our [resource page](#).

[Professors Amanda Guzmán \(Anthropology\) and Eric Galm \(Music\)](#)

# A welcome message

## STUDENT RESEARCHER ASSISTANTS

As student researchers team, we want to give you a warm welcome to our newsletter. We are excited to start collaborating with organizations interested in the Caribbean, its diaspora and in supporting scholarship at Hartford and beyond. We, like you, want to share a sense of community and build a space to host the Caribbean culture, thoughts, and contributions.

Let us share some insights into what we have been working on the last semester:

Mafer's work has been currently focused on the revision and expansion of Dr. Maurice Wade's ArcGIS StoryMap collection titled "[The Case of Haiti.](#)" This collection of StoryMaps offers an intuitive and interactive space for a general audience to familiarize themselves with Haiti's culture and history after colonization. It pays special attention to Taíno culture and legacies, as well as the start and impact of colonialism in the Americas. The content also explores the Haitian Revolution: the first successful anticolonial insurgence in the American continent. Mafer has focused mostly on revising the information while supporting it with open-access media material ready to be shared with anybody. Mafer has helped to make this digital storytelling project more accessible in terms of structure, language, and visuals.

Jackeline and Paola have been working on rebranding the Center and its outreach by identifying relevant media, texts, artwork, maps, and other resources that will be digitally displayed along with other past faculty, staff, and student projects. Their efforts have also focused on creating a new logo for the Center that includes elements from the Caribbean culture, nature, science, and identity. They have been engaged in capturing the essence of Hartford through photo essays that portray the Caribbean and Latin American culture surrounding Trinity College.

Coming soon, we are working on photo essays of spring campus events as well as Caribbean events beyond campus; Including documentation of the artisan craftsmanship displayed at a traditional fair in Ponce, Puerto Rico. At the fair, Paola had the honor to talk with a variety of artisans sharing their stories, techniques, and experiences. Most of these artisans have been supported by Plaza del Caribe in partnership with the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company and received free courses in different artistic disciplines. She cannot wait to share all that she has learned about the richness of contemporary artisanal work at this historical place.

Finally, our latest backstage work has been focused on redesigning a forthcoming WordPress companion to the current Center website. On this extension website, we will be able to highlight Caribbean digital scholarship projects, including our very own. Keep updated as we are excited to share our next projects, content, and news with you!

Hasta pronto,

-Mafer Vacca' 27, Jackeline García' 27 and Paola Evangelista' 26

# Meet the team

## CO-DIRECTORS



*Photo Courtesy  
of Prof. Amanda Guzman*

### Professor Amanda Guzman

Amanda J. Guzman is an anthropological archaeologist with a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. She specializes in the field of museum anthropology with a focus on the history of collecting and exhibiting Puerto Rico at the intersection of issues of intercultural representation and national identity formation. Professor Guzman is the co-director of Trinity's Center for Caribbean Studies. With a record of fellowships awarded by the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Museum of American History, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Guzmán has a demonstrated background in handling and interpreting objects and archival material in diverse collection-holding cultural institutions.

She supports undergraduate anthropological training beyond the classroom through academic year research assistantships and regular participation in the Summer Research Program. Professor Guzman has hosted class speaker series, focused on Puerto Rican and museum studies to promote student interactions with broader networks of scholars and cultural workers.



*Photo by Isabella Galm*

### Professor Eric Galm

Eric Galm is Professor of Music and Ethnomusicology, Chair of the Music Department, Co-Director of the Center for Caribbean Studies, Co-Chair of the Urban-Global Arts Initiative, and a former Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fellow. He founded the Trinity Samba Ensemble and the Samba Fest, an annual regional music festival that has presented the United States debut performances of several Brazilian artists. He has conducted research, presented, and performed in Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad, the United States, and Canada.

His teaching is based on an interactive kinesthetic process that intertwines hands-on music making with academic inquiry. He believes that music-making processes can be related to other sociocultural aspects that help to define societies, and many of the topics that are explored in his music classes often directly connect with several disciplines throughout the college.

# Meet the students

## RESEARCH ASSISTANTS



*Photo courtesy of Jenissa Cortes*

### Jenissa Cortes

My name is Jenissa (She/Her), I am a Junior majoring in American Studies and Human Rights. I am from Chicago, Illinois, my family is from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Ecuador. I am passionate about community organizing and finding ways to create meaningful connections among all peoples.



*Photo courtesy of Paola Evangelista*

### Paola Evangelista

My name is Paola Evangelista, I go by She/Her/Ella pronouns. I was born and raised in El Salvador specifically in Santa Tecla. Currently, I'm a sophomore pursuing a double major in Human Rights and Studio Arts. Something I'm passionate about is photography which makes me very excited to collaborate in the digital research of the Center.



*Photo courtesy of Jackeline García*

### Jackeline García Alvarado

I'm Jackeline García from Heredia, Costa Rica. I'm a freshman planning on majoring in Computer Science. As a research assistant, I am particularly passionate about enhancing the connections between the Center for Caribbean Studies and Hartford.



*Photo courtesy of Mafer Vacca*

### Mafer Vacca

¡Hola! My name is Mafer Vacca (she/her), and I am a freshman planning on majoring in Political Science and Urban Studies. Originally from Peru, I am very passionate about finding tangible solutions to social and cultural issues, with a special focus on increasing ethnic minorities' political participation.

## COCINANDO EN CASA SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

The collaborative event between the Office of Multicultural Affairs, La Voz Latina (LVL), and the Asian American Students Association (AASA) not only provided an opportunity for participants to craft their pupusas and empanadas but also served as a vibrant space for the Latin American community to come together and celebrate their diverse cultures.



*Photos courtesy of La Voz Latina*



## PARRILLADA DE LA VOZ LATINA CON MOCA AND I-HOUSE OCTOBER 13TH 2023

This event was a collaborative effort between the International House and La Voz Latina. Students enjoyed delicious food and snacks representing and commemorating the food traditions of Latin America.



*Photo by Paola Evangelista' 26*

# Past events

## NOCHE BUENA: THE ROYAL NUTCRACKER DECEMBER 9, 2023

The Fall semester's main event for La Voz Latina, known as *Noche Buena*, is a cultural celebration of the winter holidays observed throughout Latin America. The gathering celebrated Christmas with Latin American traditions, all while inviting participants to immerse in a festive atmosphere filled with Latin food, music, and performances.



Photos by Sabrina Codrington '25.

## CALL OF THE DRUM: THE BERMUDIAN GOMBEY TRADITION March 21st, 12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Austin Arts Center Music Hall.

Thursday, March 21st  
Common Hour  
(12:15-1:30)  
Austin Arts Center  
Music Hall 102  
Lunch will be provided

### Call of the Drum: The Bermudian Gombey Tradition

Gombey developed in colonial Bermuda more than two centuries ago, bringing enslaved people of West African, Caribbean and Native American heritage together to celebrate during the Christmas season. Because the British colonial government in Bermuda attempted to suppress Gombey street performances throughout its history, the genre developed both as a festive celebration and a highly symbolic art form of resistance. Today, Gombey performers are celebrated by the government of Bermuda as national emblems, yet contemporary musicians, dancers and regalia designers keep this history of oppression and resistance alive through their evocative and highly symbolic performances.

Dorothea (Dora) Hast, Visiting Scholar in Residence in the Center for Caribbean Studies and Irwin Trott, Director and Lead Drummer of the Warwick Gombey in Bermuda will discuss their collaborative book project on the Gombey tradition. They will be joined by dancer Kahni Place and bass drummer Alan Looby, both members of the Warwick Gombey Troupe in this lecture and performance event.

Co-sponsored by the Center for Caribbean Studies and the Music Department



This event offered a unique, engaging opportunity for students to hear Dorothea Hast and Irwin Trott discuss their collaborative book project regarding the Bermudian Gombey Tradition. The public carefully enjoyed the dance performance by Kahni Place and bass drummer Alan Looby, members of the Warwick Gombey Troupe.

Flyer: Collaboration of Center for Caribbean Studies & Music Department



# Upcoming events at Trinity

## PUERTO RICAN FEMINISTS CONFRONT THE STATE

April 23, 2024. 4:15 PM  
at Rittenberg Lounge, Mather

Recent protest movements in Puerto Rico have taken aim at the corruption and violence perpetrated by the colonial capitalist state. Made increasingly vulnerable by the debt crisis and failed disaster recovery, Puerto Rican feminists are building networks of solidarity and transformation grounded in a refusal of the current order. Moving through a series of snapshots, this talk shows how feminists are crafting a political praxis rooted in the idea of truly living in Puerto Rico – that is, insisting on a life of dignity and respect that is free of degradation and violence. Through community efforts, artistic interventions, and protests, feminists offer us a series of lessons about what a Puerto Rico that is more just and life affirming might look like and how we might get there.



## SAMBA FEST 2024 - 16TH YEAR

April 20, 11am-6pm  
at Gates Quad

Get ready for the 16th annual Samba Fest! This beloved celebration of music, dance, and community returns on Saturday the 20th, from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm, on the Trinity College Gates Quad, right in front of the Austin Arts Center.

In partnership with Trinity College's Bicentennial celebrations, the event will feature a participatory "Bicentennial Big Bang" with 200 drummers and international guest artists.

Come and join us to enjoy live music, and games, and celebrate the spirit of the Brazilian Carnival.



## REGGAETON ROOTS: THE CONNECTICUT DIASPORA'S IMPACT

April 11th, 7:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.  
At Connecticut Museum of  
Culture and History.



*Photos courtesy of the Connecticut  
Museum of Culture and History*

Dive into the world of reggaeton and immerse yourself in the genre's origins and evolution with Nina Vazquez, a leading advocate for reggaeton history. Nina will lead a discussion about the challenges that reggaeton has faced over the years, transitioning from being seen as a criminal genre to becoming a global phenomenon. Explore Connecticut's important role in shaping reggaeton within the Puerto Rican community at the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History.



# Sharing Caribbean Culture at Trinity

## WORKSHOP WITH THE TRINITY SAMBA ENSEMBLE AND THE WARWICK GOMBEBY TROUPE FROM BERMUDA Wednesday 3/20



The Center for Caribbean Studies recently sponsored a residency by the Warwick Gombey Troupe from Bermuda. This music and dance is part of Christmastime festivities where processions take place throughout an entire day and into the night. These images are from a collaborative workshop with the Trinity Samba Ensemble, where the two groups exchanged moves and grooves and then played together, uniting musical exchange from Bermuda to Brazil, to Connecticut.



*Photos by Jackeline García' 27.*

## RESEARCH GRANTS 2023-2024

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The Center for Caribbean Studies provides funding for research that broadens the knowledge and understanding of the Caribbean region, and its community both at home and in the diaspora, in the context of the Center's mission. The Center is dedicated to supporting Trinity students, faculty, and staff, as well as members of the Hartford community in research and projects.

Grants could fund but are not limited to, diverse projects such as:

- 1) Individual research leading to publication;
- 2) Student thesis/senior project research;
- 3) Scholarly projects focusing on the historic and contemporary countries in the Caribbean coastal regions of North, Central, and South America;
- 4) A scholarly endeavor or event with faculty and students at various academic institutions locally or in the Caribbean region;
- 5) A collaborative project that engages Caribbean communities in Greater Hartford.

The maximum grant amount is \$2,000 with the possibility to exceed that amount for truly exceptional proposals. However, proposals that exceed \$2,000 will be considered on a very exceptional basis.

### HOW TO APPLY

Information on how to apply for research grants can be found [here](#).

Proposals are accepted and considered on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted. Please contact CCS co-directors or the CCS Program Coordinator.

### ELIGIBILITY

The CCS will consider grant proposals from:

- 1) A current member of the Trinity faculty or staff undertaking individual research or research carried out in collaboration with a Trinity student or Greater Hartford Area resident.
- 2) A Trinity undergraduate or graduate student currently enrolled at the college.
- 3) A Trinity faculty member, staff member, or student in partnership with a member of the Hartford community.
- 4) A Trinity faculty member or student in partnership with researchers associated with a Center or Institute in the Grand Caribbean region formally recognized by the directors of the CCS.

### CRITERIA

Applicants should demonstrate how their project supports the Center's Mission and meets the following criteria:

- Increase the visibility of the Caribbean region on campus and in the community, leveraging the College's educational resources.
- Focus on inter-Caribbean connectedness, as well as the fluid ties between the region and other parts of the world.
- Encourage the partnership between the academic programs at Trinity and the local groups in the community.
- Partner with groups or organizations in the local Hartford Caribbean community for collaborative learning.
- Demonstrate the potential to serve as an innovative model for future projects and/or possess the potential for further growth that can be sustained over time (with the potential for additional future funding).

## TEACHING GRANTS 2023-2024

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The Center for Caribbean Studies (CCS) provides funding for teaching initiatives that broaden the knowledge and understanding of the Grand Caribbean region and its peoples at home and in the diaspora, in the context of the Center's mission.

Grants could fund, but are not limited to, such diverse projects as the following:

- 1) Development of a new course, in any discipline or interdisciplinary, dedicated to engaging the Caribbean (up to \$1000).
- 2) Revision of an existing course to better highlight the Caribbean, or to include a new unit related to the Caribbean (up to \$500).
- 3) Development of an interdisciplinary cluster of courses—from 3-4 faculty (up to \$500-\$1000 per faculty, depending on proposal).
- 4) A reading group on a topic related to the Caribbean (grant covers books for all members), with the possibility of collaborating with other projects at Trinity College.
- 5) A proposal that explores a specific on-site experiential engagement for Trinity faculty and student research, teaching, and learning in a country in the Grand Caribbean. Examples are: a remote course co-taught by faculty and attended by students from Trinity and a partner institution; a course that features lectures by faculty and experts throughout the Grand Caribbean; and seed funds to explore and develop a Grand Caribbean on-site experiential engagement proposal to the Study Away Office. Funding amounts would vary depending on the scope of the proposed engagement project.

### CRITERIA

Applicants should show how their project supports the Center's Mission. Preference will be given to projects that satisfy the following criteria:

- 1) Increase the visibility of the Caribbean region on campus and in the Greater Hartford community, leveraging the College's educational resources.
- 2) Focus on inter-Caribbean connectedness, as well as the fluid ties between the region and other parts of the world.
- 3) Encourage the partnership between the academic programs at Trinity and the local groups in the community.
- 4) Demonstrate the potential to serve as an innovative model for future projects and/or possess the potential for further growth that can be sustained over time (with the potential for additional future funding).

### ELIGIBILITY

Proposals are accepted and considered on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted. Please contact CCS co-directors or the CCS Program Coordinator. The CCS will consider teaching grant proposals from: 1) A current member of the Trinity faculty. 2) A Trinity faculty member in partnership with (a) student(s), or a resident of the Hartford or Greater Hartford community.

### HOW TO APPLY

Information on how to apply for teaching grants can be found [here](#).

## STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS

### **Caribbean and Latin American Fellowship Sponsored by the Watkinson Library, Center for Caribbean Studies, and the History Department**

Explore an exciting opportunity at the Watkinson Special Collections Library right here at Trinity. They seek intellectually passionate Trinity students to help them find new ways to explore the Watkinson Library's holdings of Caribbean and Latin American collections.

The first stage of this fellowship will involve organizing and promoting our current available materials. In the second, students will develop creative projects that help to tell the stories that emerge from the breadth of primary and secondary resources in the Watkinson Library, including maps, drawings, rare books, archival collections, and more.

Student projects could include processing archival collections, creating library study guides to help others with their research, collecting metadata for the Trinity in Trinidad video archive, conducting oral history interviews with the Latino/a/x community in Hartford to add to our current oral history archive or any other project that can help to create, highlight, and make accessible our resources on Latin America and the Caribbean.

Sponsored by the Center for Caribbean Studies, the Watkinson Library, and the History Department, Watkinson/CCS Fellows will receive a stipend of \$1,000 per academic semester. Reading proficiency in Spanish, Portuguese, or other languages registered in the history and culture of the Caribbean is preferred. Your project, accompanied by a brief report outlining your weekly progress and reflective experience, will be presented at an event towards the end of each award term.

### **The Center for Caribbean Studies Maurice Wade Student Fellowship in Caribbean Anti-Colonial Thought**

This one-semester student fellowship provides an opportunity for a Trinity College student to work in collaboration with the co-directors of the College's Center for Caribbean Studies and a Trinity College faculty sponsor/supervisor to maintain and develop the Center's Online Archive of Caribbean Anti-Colonial Thought. This archival project is steeped in the following Mission of the Center: to embrace the broader Caribbean – the Greater and Lesser Antilles and the coastal regions of Central and South America – as an area for scholarly inquiry with a special focus on inter-Caribbean connectedness, as well as the fluid historical and contemporary ties between the region, its diasporas, and other parts of the world. The Center will also celebrate and study the Caribbean character of the city of Hartford.



*Photo by Paola Evangelista' 26*

## 2024 SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM, CUNY DOMINICAN STUDIES INSTITUTE

APPLICATION DEADLINE: APRIL 15, 2024  
BY 11:59PM.

CUNY DSI's Summer Internship Program offers graduate and undergraduate students a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful research within the domain of Dominican Studies. Participants receive guidance from experts and access to specialized resources like the Dominican Library and Archives. They collaborate with faculty mentors, develop independent research projects, and immerse themselves in foundational texts. The program runs from June to August 2024, fully in-person at The City College of New York. Application deadline: April 15, 2024, with notifications by April 30, 2024.

“While at CUNY DSI, summer interns immerse themselves in foundational Dominican Studies texts, develop an independent research agenda, and refine a comprehensive research project currently underway at the Institute” -CUNY Dominican Institute

Find more information here: <https://www.cuny.cuny.edu/dsi/summer-internship-program>



Images courtesy of The City University of New York  
Website

## OUR NEW PRESENTATION AND LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

We are thrilled to embark on this journey of fostering relationships and building a vibrant community around the cultural tapestry of the Caribbean. As we introduce ourselves, we are currently in the process of rebranding our center, and we invite you to meet our newest logo. Inspired by the castor bean seed, it reflects the organic essence of seed and life.



The castor bean plant, with its glossy, red, green, and sometimes purple star-shaped leaves, carries a profound historical significance. Introduced to the Americas by enslaved Africans, these plants were utilized for medicinal purposes, demonstrating a remarkable duality of poison-healing or poison-defense.



They were also employed for purging, cleansing, and protection, embodying a complex relationship between nature and culture.

Our desire to connect with a broader audience and celebrate the knowledge heritage of the Caribbean drives our mission. We are eager to engage with individuals and organizations who share our passion for exploring and preserving Caribbean culture and history. Whether you have ideas for collaborations or inquiries about our work, please don't hesitate to reach out. Together, let's embark on a journey of discovery and celebration. Thank you for being a part of our community.