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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita's Carvajal-Villamar presents paper at Society for Amazonian & Andean Studies meeting



By Ashly Stracener

October 28, 2019

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Ouachita Baptist University's Dr. Jerusa Carvajal-Villamar, assistant professor of Spanish, recently presented a paper at the biennial meeting of the Society for Amazonian & Andean Studies (SAAS). The conference was held Oct. 5-6 in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and was hosted by the University of Alabama.

The SAAS national conference is dedicated to studying, featuring and promoting research about the Amazonian and Andean regions of South America. Attendees represent a wide diversity of disciplines and fields, such as literature, ethnography, cultural studies, dietetics, contemporary themes, archaeology and more.

With her area of expertise being literature, Carvajal-Villamar said she attended the conference to seek "to deepen my knowledge of this region."

"I believe the conference offered me a valuable opportunity to learn from the different disciplines that study it, to meet other people who are also interested in the regions and to be exposed to their different contributions



from their areas of study," Carvajal-Villamar said.

Carvajal-Villamar presented her work, "A Portrait of the Amazons in a Play of American-Theme in the Spanish Golden Age." Her essay analyzed *Amazonas en las Indias*, a 17th century Incan comedy by Tirso de Molina. Carvajal-Villamar focused on the justification of conquest and the actions of conquerors, regardless of the reality of the original inhabitants. Her essay also highlighted how Spanish Golden Age literature about America is interconnected with the diverse fields that study both the Amazonian and Andean regions.

"I witnessed how the literature written in the 17th century about the Incario could be very relevant and a good tool that can help in the interpretation and recreation of the data presented by the social sciences," Carvajal-Villamar said. "The literary evidence represented in the comedies of the American theme, which show the ideas that circulated during that time, now help us raise awareness about the injustices and misrepresentations of the original inhabitants of America.

"I hope that my work, as well as the work of other participants from the different specialties, will provide a more complex vision of what the Incario was when the Spanish arrived," Carvajal-Villamar continued. "Archaeological findings and ethnographic research tell us something about the Amerindian culture and people. Seventeenth century literature written by the Spaniards also provides evidence regarding the life of this culture and how it was perceived."

"We are so pleased to have a scholar of Dr. Carvajal's caliber on our faculty at Ouachita," said Dr. Doug Sonheim, chair of Ouachita's Department of Language and Literature and holder of the Clarence and Bennie Sue Anthony Chair of Bible and Humanities. "Her lively curiosity brings delight to her colleagues in the Department of Language and Literature, to her colleagues across campus and, of course, to her students, who benefit from her diligent teaching."

Dr. Carvajal-Villamar has taught in Ouachita's Department of Language and Literature since August of 2017. She holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish from the University of Massachusetts at Boston and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Spanish literature from Western Michigan University. She also holds an M.A. in Christian education and a Master of Divinity degree from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In addition to SAAS, Carvajal-Villamar is a member of the Association for Hispanic Classic Theater and the Modern Language Association.

For more information, contact Dr. Carvajal-Villamar at carvajali@obu.edu or (870) 245-5287.