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Chelsea Whelpley
Ouachita Baptist University

Ouachita News Bureau
Ouachita Baptist University

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Ouachita to host Dr. Juan Carlos Rodríguez in Birkett Williams Lecture Oct. 14



By Chelsea Whelpley

October 06, 2014

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Ouachita Baptist University will host Dr. Juan Carlos Rodríguez, assistant professor of Spanish at Georgia Institute of Technology, as part of Ouachita's endowed Birkett Williams Lecture Series on Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7:30 p.m. The lecture, "Urban Projections, Cinematic Bricks: Cities as Construction Sites in Latin American Documentaries," will be held in Mabee Fine Art Center's McBeth Recital Hall on Ouachita's campus.

"It is ideal when a speaker can exemplify the interdisciplinary approach that is so important to us at Ouachita," said Dr. Jeff Root, dean of the School of Humanities. "Juan Carlos Rodríguez will do exactly that with his background in Latin America, documentary film and issues facing us all."

The lecture series is held each semester and rotates among Ouachita's seven academic schools. This semester, OBU's School of Humanities invited Dr. Rodríguez as the guest lecturer. The lecture will use documentary film to explore changing cultural and social relations due to urbanization and rapid growth in Latin American cities.

“Since documentary is a genre that can combine research, journalism, sociology, political science and the fine arts, I thought it could generate a good dialogue across disciplines,” said Dr. Margarita Pintado, assistant professor of Spanish at Ouachita.

In this presentation, Rodríguez will explore how Latin American documentaries focusing on the processes of building, demolition and renovation offer a new window to examine the rhythm of urban change as well as the social anxieties produced by it, which in turn redefine the urban imaginaries of different cities in the region.

“Dr. Rodríguez’ visit gives us a unique opportunity to take an interdisciplinary look at a fascinating region that grows more important to the United States every day,” added Dr. Mark McGraw, assistant professor of Spanish.

Rodríguez earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree at Duke University. His research and teaching focuses on the areas of cinema, documentary, urban culture and literature from Latin America and the Hispanic Caribbean.

Ouachita’s Birkett Williams lecture series was established in 1977 through a gift from the late Birkett L. Williams, a 1910 Ouachita graduate. The lectures provide an opportunity to extend the liberal arts education outside of the classroom by bringing leading scholars and public figures of various disciplines to Ouachita’s campus.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Dr. Margarita Pintado at pintadom@obu.edu.