

# Rachael Montesano

University of Vermont  
Department of Romance Languages  
85 S. Prospect St.  
508 Waterman Building Burlington, VT 05405  
Rachael.Montesano@uvm.edu

---

## Research and Teaching Interests

Language acquisition pedagogy, race and power in the United States and Latin America; Afro Latin American and Afro Latinx studies, migrant labor and the economics of global racialization, decoloniality, food sovereignty, sustainability

## Course Design

**DI/SU/CL SPAN 3102/GRS 3102: Race, Identity and Migrant Labor.** A designated service-learning and sustainability course. The unifying theme of this writing intensive Composition and Conversation course is the Mexican-American experience in the United States during the 20th and 21st centuries including the migrant farm worker experience in the US and the Zoot Suit culture of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This course examines identity, institutional racism, racism and the mainstream media, and issues of social sustainability. The service-learning portion of the course focuses on issues surrounding Vermont's migrant dairy farmworkers.

**GRS 3990: Afro-Latin American Agency and National Belonging.** This course examines the racialization of migrant labor while exploring the notion of citizenship, nativism, and power accumulation in the United States, Mexico, and Central America. At the core of the course is the study of the American, Mexican, and Central American racial hierarchy systems as they relate to the African diaspora in the Americas, with a focus placed on the transnational identities of Afro-Latinx communities in the United States. Students learn about the concept of epistemic violence and how the gatekeeping of history works on both a national and global scale. While exploring the concepts of erasure, colorblindness, and nation building, students engage in a study of counter-narratives that examine the political power, economic power, legal strategies, and the cultural production employed by African-Americans and Afro-Latin Americans to subvert structural discrimination in their countries. The notion of American exceptionalism (as applied to the US) is investigated through the lens of racial hierarchy systems, political identity, global labor and migration, transnational identity, and national belonging.

**SPAN 3110: Black and Indigenous Women and the Nation**  
This composition and conversation course examines the voices of Afro-descendant and Indigenous Latin American women. While exploring the concepts of erasure, colorblindness, and nation building, students will

engage in a study of counter-narratives that examine the political power, economic power, legal strategies, and the cultural production employed by Afro-descendant and Indigenous Latin American women to subvert structural discrimination in their countries. Through readings, investigation, writing, and discussion students explore a diversity of voices situated in their historical, political, and social contexts.

**SPAN 3110: Black Agency in Latin America**

This writing intensive Composition and Conversation course examines the voices and experiences of Afro-Latin Americans. This course focuses on Black agency and examines the economic, legal, cultural, and social impacts of Afro-Latin Americans as well as the reasons behind their erasure. Students examine the racialization of migrant labor and the refusal of citizenship and human rights fueled both in the US and Latin America by the eugenics movement. Focusing specifically on the banana industry in Central America, students study the white supremacist doctrine and political intervention of the United States government, shedding light on the structures of power and privilege at work in both Central America and the United States.

**SPAN 3110: Women and Activism in the Americas.** The unifying theme of this Spanish composition and conversation course is the cultural and political activism of women in the Americas. Through readings, investigation, writing and discussion, student explore a diversity of voices situated in their historical, political and social contexts. Students also examine Indigenous worldviews and discuss the concept of decoloniality. This course uses an interdisciplinary approach to facilitate the expression of ideas and the discussion of different points of view while studying language and culture.

**Intermediate Spanish I (SPAN 2100: Race and Power in Latin America and the United States).** Intermediate language course taught through an exploration of the concept of race and how it relates to systems of power in Latin America and the United States.

**Intermediate Spanish II (SPAN 2200: Immigration, food justice and social movements in Latin America).** Intermediate language course taught through an exploration of food systems, migration and immigration, and social movements in Latin America.

**Teaching experience**

**University of Vermont**

**Department of Romance Languages**

*Senior Lecturer in Spanish.* Courses taught: D1/SL/SU SPAN 3102: Race, Identity & Migrant Labor, GRS 3102: Afro-Latin American Agency and National Belonging, SPAN 3110:

Composition and Conversation, Beginning and Intermediate Spanish (SPAN 1100, SPAN 1200, SPAN 2100, SPAN 2200), August 2006-present

***Co-Coordinator Spanish Language Community Reporting Initiative.*** Center for Community News, University of Vermont. August 2025-May 2026

***Language Coordinator.*** Coordination of first and second year French, Italian, and Spanish language courses. August 2013-May 2015

**Willamette University**

**Department of Foreign Languages**

***Visiting Instructor of Spanish.*** Courses taught: Spanish Composition and Discussion (SPAN 331), Intermediate Spanish I (SPAN 231), Intermediate Spanish II (SPAN 232). August 2005-May 2006

**Oregon State University**

**Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures**

***Adjunct Spanish Instructor.*** Courses taught: Intermediate Spanish (SPAN 212), Beginning Spanish (SPAN 111, 112, 113). Intensive Beginning Spanish (SPAN 111, 112, 113). July 2004-August 2005.

**Western Oregon University**

**Division of Humanities and Social Sciences**

***Adjunct Spanish Instructor.*** Courses taught: Mexican Civilization and Culture (HUM 340), Spanish Conversation (SPAN 299), Intermediate Spanish (SPAN 202), Beginning Spanish (SPAN 101, 102, 103). September 2004-August 2005.

**University of Oregon**

**Department of Romance Languages**

***Spanish Graduate Teaching Fellow.*** Courses taught: Beginning Spanish (SPAN 101, 102, 103). September 1999-December 1999, September 2002-December 2003.

**Education**

MA, Spanish, University of Oregon, December 2003

BA, Spanish, *Cum Laude*, with departmental honors, University of Oregon, 1999

## Teaching awards

Outstanding New Service-Learning Faculty Award, UVM  
(2017)

## Most recent professional development

- UVM SWLC Symposium on AI and World Languages Instruction (Sept. 2024)
- CELO Pedagogy Institute: Pre-Engagement Preparation (preparing students for community engagement) (June 2023)
- Workshop: Enacting inclusive L2 writing pedagogy: A Design orientation (April 2023)
- The Climate Wisdom Lab Professional Development Program (January 2022)
- Global Conference on Sustainability in Higher Education (October 2020).
- Workshop: *Promoting Student Autonomy: an Inductive Approach to Grammar*, UVM (2019)
- Workshop: *Structured Reflection for Collegiate Foreign Language Learning*, UVM (2019)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference (2018)
- UVM Campus-Wide Faculty Conference *Narratives and Counter-Narratives in Academic Practice*. (August 2018)
- Pulp Culture Comic Arts Festival and Symposium, Vermont Folklife Center/UVM, presenter (2017)
- UVM Sustainability Faculty Fellows Program (2015-16)
- Campus Compact Environmental Stewardship Faculty Development Institute & Training, University of Maine (2015)
- Facilitated Peer-Editing Workshop for Department of Romance Languages and Linguistics, UVM (2015)
- Facilitated Authentic Informational Texts and Reading Fluency Workshop for Department of Romance Languages and Linguistics, UVM (2015)
- Facilitated workshop titled “Task-Based Instruction and Communicative Competence: How Focusing on Meaning Creates Fertile Ground for Language Acquisition” for Department of Romance Languages and Linguistics, Department of German and Russian, UVM (2014)
- Facilitated workshop titled “Content-Based Course Design: Maximizing Student Engagement in Language

Learning” for Department of Romance Languages and Linguistics, UVM (2014)

- Presenter, “Authentic Assessment and Content-Based Course Design in the Language Classroom: Making Exams and Language Learning More Meaningful,” International Conference on Language Pedagogy, University of Toronto. (2014)
- Campus Compact Winter Institute on Service Learning, University of Vermont and St. Michael’s College (2014)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference (2013)
- Universal Course Design, University of Vermont (2013)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference (2012)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference (2011)
- Grading and Responding to Writing (Writing in the Disciplines workshop) (2011)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Conference (2010)
- Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) (2010)
- Writing in the Disciplines Summer Institute, University of Vermont (2009)
- Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) (2009)
- Digital Storytelling Workshop, University of Vermont (2008)