

RENÉ ESPARZA

Washington University in St. Louis
Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Washington University in St. Louis
Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Assistant Professor

July 2019-Present

University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Department of American Studies
Post-Doctoral Research Associate

2017-2019

EDUCATION

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Department of American Studies, PhD

2017

Dissertation: *From Vice to Nice: Race, Sex, and the Gentrification of AIDS*

Committee: Roderick A. Ferguson (Co-Advisor), Kevin P. Murphy (Co-Advisor), Martin F. Manalansan, IV, Sandra K. Soto, Edén Torres, and Lorena Muñoz.

Department of American Studies, MA

2014

Thesis: "Strange Bedfellows: Anti-Pornography Rhetoric, Moral Conservatism, and Urban Renewal."

Advisors: David J. Karjanen, Kevin P. Murphy, and Edén E. Torres.

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Department of Anthropology, BA

2009

Department of Latina/o Studies, BA

2009

Honors: Highest Distinction; Chancellor's Scholar

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Queer of color critique; women of color feminism; LGBTQ studies; comparative race and ethnic studies; urban politics, history, and discourses; neoliberalism; War on Drugs; HIV/AIDS

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

Esparza, R. "Communal Intimacies: Bringing the Domestic into the Public," *GLQ* 30, no. 4 (2024): 485-503.

Esparza, R. "'We Lived as Do Spouses': AIDS, Neoliberalism, and Family-Based Apartment Succession Rights in 1980s New York City." *Journal of History of Sexuality* 31, no. 1 (2022): 59-88.

Esparza, R. "Qué Bonita Mi Tierra: Latinx AIDS Activism and Decolonial Queer Praxis in 1980s New York and Puerto Rico." *Radical History Review* 140 (2021): 107-41.

Esparza, R. “Black Bodies on Lockdown: AIDS Moral Panic and the Criminalization of HIV in Times of White Injury.” *The Journal of African American History* 104, no. 2 (2019): 250-80.

Esparza, R. “Heteronormativity and Homonormativity in Queer Chicana/o Cultural Discourse and Politics.” In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latina/o Literature*, ed. Louis Mendoza, 1-38. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Esparza, R. “Queering the Homeland: Chicanidad, Racialized Homophobia, and the Political Economy of Homopatriarchy.” *Feminist Formations* 29, no. 2 (2017): 147-76.

Book Chapters

Esparza, R. “Sex,” in *Keywords for Medical Humanities*, ed. Priscilla Wald, Jonathan Metzl, and Sari Altschuler (New York: NYU Press, 2023).

Esparza, R. “Coming Out: On the Down-Low in Communities of Color.” In volume 3 of *LGBT Americans at Risk: Problems and Solutions*, ed. Chuck Stewart, 237-58. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2018.

Book Reviews

Esparza, R. Book Review of *Visions and Revisions: Coming of Age in the Age of AIDS* by Dale Peck. *Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender History Newsletter*, (Fall 2017).

Esparza, R. Book Review of *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* by Christina B. Hanhardt. *Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender History Newsletter*, (Spring 2014).

Popular Press

Esparza, R. “Puerto Rican LGBT Activism can expand our vision for Pride Month,” *Washington Post*, June 25, 2021.

WORKS IN PROGRES

Books

Esparza, R. *From Vice to Nice: Midwestern Politics and the Gentrification of AIDS*. Forthcoming—UNC Press.

GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

National Science Foundation

Knowledge of AIDS Research Collaboration Network 2024-2027

Washington University in St. Louis

The Center for the Humanities Summer 2023
Summer Faculty Research Grant

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Ford Foundation 2022-2023
Ford Postdoctoral Fellowship

Washington University in St. Louis The Center for the Humanities First Book Faculty Fellowship	Spring 2022
The Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity, and Equity (Declined) Faculty Fellowship	Spring 2022
The Center for Black, Brown, and Queer Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship	2020-2021
Washington University in St. Louis The Center for the Humanities Summer Faculty Research Grant	Summer 2020
University of Maryland, Baltimore County Drescher Center for the Humanities Scholarly Development Fund	Fall 2018
ONE Archives Foundation, Inc. ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives LGBTQ Research Fellowship	Summer 2018
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Graduate School Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship	2015-2016
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Department of American Studies Stanley Andersen Summer Research Fellowship	Summer 2014
Graduate School Diversity Office Dove Summer Dissertation Research Fellowship	Summer 2013
College of Liberal Arts Graduate Research Partnership Program Fellowship	Summer 2012
Department of American Studies The Mulford Q. Sibley Graduate Fellowship	Summer 2011
Graduate School Diversity Office Dove Summer Pre-Dissertation Research Fellowship	Summer 2010
Graduate School of Diversity Office Diversity of Views and Experiences (DOVE) Fellowship	2009-2010

AWARDS

Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History	Spring 2022
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Audre Lorde Prize for outstanding article on LGBT history for “Qué Bonita Mi Tierra: Latinx AIDS Activism and Decolonial Queer Praxis in 1980s New York and Puerto Rico.”

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Esparza, R. “Mapping Alternative Belonging: Queer of Color Homemaking in Neoliberal Urban Landscapes.” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY, January 2025.

Esparza, R. “Queering the Domestic” GLQ Special Issue Roundtable. American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD. November 2024.

Esparza, R. “The Life and Death of Ryan White” Book Roundtable. American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD. November 2024.

Esparza, R. Discussant for “Trans and Gender Nonconforming Histories of the Carceral State” Panel. Queer History Conference, Fullerton, CA, June 2024.

Esparza, R. “Queering the U.S. History Survey and Beyond.” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, April 2024.

Esparza, R. “*Del Otro Lado* (From the Other Side): Transnational Latinx AIDS Activism from IRCA to NAFTA.” American Historical Association Meeting, San Francisco, CA, January 2024.

Esparza, R. “From Mariel to Minnesota: Broken Sponsorships and Queer Cuban Exile in the Upper Midwest.” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, January 2023.

Esparza, R. “New Histories of LGBTQ Space and Place.” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, April 2022.

Esparza, R. “The Great Gay Return: AIDS ‘Homecoming’ Narratives and Middle America’s Fantasies of Racial Reconciliation.” Queer History Conference, San Francisco, CA, June 2022.

Esparza, R. “AIDS ‘Homecoming’ Narratives: Domestic Activism and Fantasies of Racial Reconciliation in 1980s Middle America.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Juan, PR, October 2021.

Esparza, R. “Towards a Decolonial Queer Praxis: AIDS, Puerto Rico, and Transnational Circuits of Latina/o Activism.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Honolulu, HI, November 2019.

Esparza, R. “‘Qué Bonita Mi Tierra:’ US Latinx AIDS Activism in Mexico and Puerto Rico.” Queer History Conference, San Francisco, CA, June 2019.

Esparza, R. “‘We Lived as Do Spouses:’ AIDS, Neoliberalism, and Family-Based Apartment Succession Rights in 1980s New York City.” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, April 2019.

Esparza, R. “Black Sexuality in Times of White Injury: The Media-Orchestrated HIV-Criminalization of Black Sex Workers.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 2018.

Esparza, R. “Play It Safe! The Racial Politics of HIV-Prevention and Anti-Violence Gay Activism in 1980s Minneapolis.” Urban History Association Conference, Columbia, SC, October 2018.

Esparza, R. “Latinx ACT UP: Transnational AIDS Activism.” Latina/o Studies Association Conference, Washington D.C., July 2018.

Esparza, R. “Propertied Belongings: AIDS Evictions, Neoliberal Subjection, and the Spatialized Politics of Homonormativity.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, November 2017.

Esparza, R. “Black Bodies on Lockdown: The Criminalization of HIV Times of White Injury.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, November 2016.

Esparza, R. “Flying Into Marriage, Minnesota: Racialized Homelessness and the Circuits of Queer Mobility in the Neoliberal Heartland.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada, October 2015.

Esparza, R. “And the Bathhouse Played On: Race, Sex, and the Politics of Public Health in the Twin Cities.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, November 2014.

Esparza, R. “The Violence of Property: Race, Space, and the Neoliberal Restructuring of Public Housing in Minneapolis.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington D.C., November 2013.

Esparza, R. “From the Bathhouse to the Townhouse: The Gentrification of Gay Male Sexuality in the Twin Cities.” Critical Ethnic Studies Association Conference, Chicago, IL, September 2013.

Esparza, R. “Queering the Homeland: Return Narratives of the Gay Mexican-American Diaspora.” American Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Juan, Puerto Rico, November 2012.

Esparza, R. “There’s More to Being Gay than ‘Will & Grace’: Alternate Sexualities of Latino Men on the Down Low.” Ronald E. McNair Scholars’ Conference, Champaign, IL, August 2007.

INVITED TALKS

OLIN Labs

PrideScapes: An Exploration of LGBTQ+ Landscapes (Invited Panelist) Summer 2021
“Landscapes and Pandemics: The Inequities of HIV/AIDS and COVID-19.”

University of Iowa, Iowa City

Department of American Studies (Invited Speaker) Winter 2019

“‘Qué Bonita Mi Tierra’: US Latinx AIDS Activism in Mexico and Puerto Rico.”

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Department of Latina/o Studies (Invited Speaker)

Winter 2019

“‘Qué Bonita Mi Tierra’: US Latinx AIDS Activism in Mexico and Puerto Rico.”

Washington University at St. Louis

Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies (Invited Speaker)

Winter 2018

“Play It Safe: Anti-Violence Gay Activism, Racialized Criminality, and the Spatial Politics of Homonormativity.”

University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Department of American Studies (Invited Speaker)

Winter 2017

“Play It Safe: Anti-Violence Gay Activism, Racialized Criminality, and the Spatial Politics of Homonormativity.”

Ithaca College

Department of Women’s and Gender Studies (Invited Speaker)

Winter 2016

“Play It Safe: Anti-Violence Gay Activism, Racialized Criminality, and the Spatial Politics of Homonormativity.”

University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire

Department of Women’s Studies (Invited Speaker)

Spring 2015

“Mapping U.S. Homonormativity: AIDS and the Politics of Public Health in the Heartland.”

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Department of History (Lecturer)

Fall 2014

HIST 3212: Dissident Sexualities in U.S. History

“Gay Sex in the 80s: HIV-Prevention, Moral Conservatism, and Fiscal Austerity.”

Department of Chicano and Latino Studies (Lecturer)

Spring 2014

CHIC 1102: Latinas/os in the United States: Culture and Citizenship

“This is your Brain on Drugs: Race, Gender, and Mass Incarceration in the Age of Neoliberalism.”

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Washington University in St. Louis

Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Instructor of Record

Fall 2024

WGSS 4350: Queer and Feminist Geographies

WGSS 100: Intro to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Instructor of Record

Spring 2024

WGSS 383: Sex and the City: Gender, Sexuality, and the Urban Landscape

WGSS 100: Intro to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Instructor of Record

Fall 2023

WGSS 3141: The Racial and Sexual Politics of Public Health

WGSS 100: Intro to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	
Instructor of Record	Spring 2021
WGSS 383: Sex and the City: Gender, Sexuality, and the Urban Landscape	
WGSS 100: Intro to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	
Instructor of Record	Fall 2020
WGSS 3141: The Racial and Sexual Politics of Public Health	
WGSS 100: Intro to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	
Instructor of Record	Spring 2020
WGSS 383: Sex and the City: Gender, Sexuality, and the Urban Landscape	
WGSS 100: Intro to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	
Instructor of Record	Fall 2019
WGSS 100: Intro to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	
Department of American Studies	
Instructor of Record	Fall 2018
AMST 200: What is an American?	
Instructor of Record	
AMST 380: Community in America	Spring 2018
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	
Department of Chicano and Latino Studies	
Instructor of Record	
CHIC 1112: Introduction to Chicano Studies: Critical Paradigms	Spring 2017
Instructor of Record	
CHIC 4232: Chicana/o and Latina/o Gender and Sexuality	Fall 2016
Department of American Studies	
Grader	Fall 2015
AMST 4101: Gender, Sexuality, and Politics in America	
Instructor of Record	Spring 2015
AMST 4101: Gender, Sexuality, and Politics in America	
Instructor of Record	Fall 2014
AMST 4101: Gender, Sexuality, and Politics in America	
Department of Chicano and Latino Studies	
Grader	Spring 2014
CHIC 1102: Latinos in the U.S.: Culture and Citizenship	
Department of American Studies	
Grader	Fall 2013
AMST 2011: The U.S. since September 11	

Instructor of Record AMST 1012: Migrants Refugees, Citizens, and Exiles	Spring 2013
Instructor of Record AMST 1401: Comparative Genders and Sexualities	Fall 2012
Teaching Assistant AMST 3252W: American Popular Culture and Politics: 1940 to the Present	Spring 2012
Teaching Assistant AMST 3252W: American Popular Culture and Politics: 1900-1940	Fall 2011
Teaching Assistant AMST 3253W: American Popular Culture and Politics: 1940 to the Present	Spring 2011
Grader AMST 4101: Gender, Sexuality, and Politics in America	Fall 2010

OTHER TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Washington University in St. Louis Pre-College Programs Summer Exploration Courses Spandex, Spangles, and Stripes: Race, Gender, and the American Superhero	2023-Present
Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Directed Study Queer Geographies of Health	Spring 2025
Directed Study Queer and Trans Migrations	Fall 2024
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Department of American Studies Directed Study Race, Class, and Inequality in American Society	Summer 2016
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Instructor of Record U.S. Immigration History	Winter 2014
Instructor of Record American LGBT Politics	Winter 2013
McNamara Academic Center for Student-Athletes Subject Tutor	2012-2013

SERVICE

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Washington University in St. Louis	
Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies	
Undergraduate Studies Committee/Colloquium Committee	2023-Present
Post-Doc in WGSS—Chair of Search Committee	Spring 2024
Lecture Series/Graduate Committee	2019-2021
Senior Honors Thesis Advising	
Maya Torres Colom	Present
Abigail Matthews	2023-2024
Senior Honors Thesis Committee Member	
Amelia Letson	Present
Ali Mora	2023-2024
Lily Coll	2023-2024
Student Advising—11 Majors	2019-Present
College of Arts and Sciences	
Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship	
Marc Ridgell	2021-2023
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	
Co-Chair Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Interdisciplinary Graduate Group	2014-2015

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Committee Member, OAH's Cmte. on the Status of LGBTQ Historians and Histories	Present
Exhibit Peer-Reviewer, <i>Queer Pasts</i> , ProQuest	Spring 2025
Journal Peer-Reviewer, <i>Bulletin of the History of Medicine</i>	Spring 2024-Fall 2024
Committee Member, John D'Emilio Dissertation Prize, OAH	Fall 2024
Committee Member, John D'Emilio Dissertation Prize, OAH	Fall 2023
Committee Member, Audre Lorde Prize, CLGBTH	Fall 2023
Proposal Reviewer, CLGBTH-Gale Non-Residential Fellowship	Spring 2022
Journal Peer-Reviewer, <i>Modern American History</i>	2020
Journal Peer-Reviewer, <i>First Monday</i>	2020
Proposal Reviewer, Queer History Conference	2019

MEMBERSHIPS

American Historical Association
American Studies Association

Latina/o Studies Association
Latin American Studies Association
LGBTQ+ History (formerly Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History)
Organization of American Historians

LANGUAGES

Spanish (fluent)

REFERENCES

Roderick A. Ferguson (Professor)
Yale University
Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality
roderick.ferguson@yale.edu
(203) 432-0845

Kevin P. Murphy (Professor)
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Department of American Studies/Department of History
kpmurphy@umn.edu
(612) 624-9021

Jennifer Brier (Professor)
University of Illinois, Chicago
Department of History/Program in Gender and Women's Studies
jbrier@uic.edu
(312) 413-2458

Nayan Shah (Professor)
University of Southern California
Department of American Studies and Ethnicity/Department of History
nayansha@usc.edu
(213) 740-2426