Hello to all LAIS majors and minors

I am the Faculty Undergraduate Advisor for Latin American and Iberian Studies.

I’d like to introduce myself to you all virtually........with the expectation that I’ll soon meet you all face-to-face, and get to know you personally.

I’m delighted that you have chosen LAIS. Choosing an interdisciplinary program, taught in various departments and with a range of approaches demonstrates that you are people who are willing and able to create your own pathways, make your own decisions, and succeed in a range of fields, which stands you in excellent stead to succeed in and contribute to the changeable, global present and future.

A little about me....
I migrated to the U.S.A. a year ago. I am based in the Music Department, and I also teach in the Theater and Dance Department and am affiliated to Feminist Studies and, obviously, Latin American and Iberian Studies.

At UCSB I teach courses on Musics in Mexico; Mexican Theater and Performance; Worlds of Music; Performance/Memory/History; and Performance Studies.

I combine three major areas as scholar, creator and performer. My interdisciplinary research engages the fields of performance studies, ethnomusicology (i.e. music in context), dance and theatre studies, community arts, Mexican studies, and feminist studies.

Last year my monograph, Embodying Mexico: Tourism, Nationalism, and Performance, was published by Oxford University Press. This study is based on research that I undertook in Mexico for many years, living in Morelia and Lake Pátzcuaro, Michoacán. At that time I played violin with the ensemble Los Purépechas de Jarácuar, for La Danza de los Viejitos.

I have also edited a collection of essays that will be available very soon, with the title Women Singers in Global Contexts: Music, Biography, Identity (University of Illinois Press). And I working on my second monograph Performing Memory: Contemporary Mexican Theater, which comes out of research that I did with two theater companies in Mexico City.
Before returning to academia in 2002 (and after finishing my undergraduate study in 1983) I had a successful career as a professional stage and TV actress and singer, and also worked as a community arts facilitator, and Head of Music in secondary education. In the field of arts and disability, I directed the InterAct Theatre Workshop. I completed my Ph.D. in 2002, and held the post of professor at the University of Winchester, U.K.

In all of my research, creative activities, and teaching I am particularly interested in power relations, political processes, gender relations, tourism, and nationalistic processes. In the same way that in choosing Latin American and Iberian Studies you are demonstrating your interest in creating your own pathways and following interdisciplinary interests, so too my own life and career encompasses similar characteristics.

My desire is for you all to be rigorous in your studies; to take pleasure in learning and discovering; and to be successful in achieving your goals. My role is to enable you to flourish and thrive here at UCSB. Please do contact me at any time if you’d like to talk about your program of study (or indeed, anything else that interests you).

I look forward to meeting you all soon.

Ruth

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