

# Diana Leon-Boys

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## EDUCATION

- 2020  
(2015-2020) **Ph.D., Communications & Media** (Latina/o Studies Graduate Minor)  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL  
*Dissertation Title:* “Bienvenida a Disney, Princess Elena: Exploring Race, Age, and Gender in Disney’s *Elena of Avalor*”  
*Committee:* Dr. Angharad N. Valdivia, Dr. Cameron McCarthy, Dr. Isabel Molina-Guzmán, Dr. Myra S. Washington
- 2013  
(2011-2013) **M.A., Communication**  
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM  
*Thesis Title:* “A Latina Captain in Showtime’s *Dexter*: (Un)Veiling a Progressive Image of Latinas through Discourse Analysis of Media-Audience Co-Constructions of Latinidad”  
*Committee:* Dr. Ilia Rodriguez, Dr. Nancy Lopez, Dr. Myra S. Washington
- 2010  
(2006-2010) **B.A., Communication Studies**  
Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX  
*Capstone Title:* “Latina Bodies as Hollywood Fairytale?: Latinidad and Hybridity in Lingerie and Swimwear Advertisements”  
*Thesis Advisor:* Dr. Julia R. Johnson

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2020-Present Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of South Florida, Tampa

## LANGUAGES

English and Spanish (Fluent, Native Speaker)

## RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

- Media and Cinema Studies
- Latina/o Communication Studies
- Latina/o Studies
- Girlhood Studies
- Gender and Sexuality Studies
- Cultural Studies
- Critical Ethnic Studies
- TV and New Media
- Digital Studies
- Critical Rhetoric
- Disney
- Communication Studies

## PUBLICATIONS

### *Journal Articles (Peer Reviewed)*

Leon-Boys, D. & Valdivia, A.N. (2020). The Location of US Latinidad: *Stuck in the Middle*, Disney and the in Between Ethnicity. *Journal of Children and Media*, 15(2).

Leon-Boys, D. (In Press). Exploring Disney's New Latina Leader: A Digital and Discursive Analysis of *Elena of Avalor*. Special Issue: IGSA@ND. *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 14(2).

Leon-Boys, D. (In Press). No Spanish in Cinderella's Kingdom: A Situated Ethnography of Disney World's Engagement with *Elena of Avalor*. Special Issue: Working the Circuit: Cultural Studies of Florida in *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*.

Leon-Boys, D. & Chávez, C. (Under Review). Disney's Global Borderland as Postcolonial Fantasy: Renegotiating The Frontier Narrative in *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*. *Communication, Culture & Critique*

### *Book Chapters (Peer Reviewed)*

Leon-Boys, D. (2019). A Latina Captain: Decentering Latinidad through Audience Constructions in *Dexter*. In Hernandez, L., Bowen, D., De Los Santos- Upton, S, & Martinez, A. (Eds.). *Latina/o/x Communication Studies: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. Maryland: Lexington Books.

Leon-Boys, D., & Kristensen, M. (2018). Race, Cyborgs, and the Pitfalls of Biopolitical Discourse in *Black Mirror's* "Men Against Fire." In A. Cirucci & B. Vackery (Eds.) *Black Mirror and Critical Media Theory*. Maryland: Lexington Books.

Johnson, J. R., Gonzalez, M., Ray, C., Hager, J., **Leon, D.**, Spalding, S., & Brigham, T. (2011). Daring pedagogy: Dialoguing about intersectionality and social justice. In S.M. Pliner & C.A. Banks (Eds.) *Teaching, Learning, and Intersecting Identities in Higher Education* (pp. 179-200). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishers.

### *Book Reviews*

Leon-Boys, D. (In Press). Book Review of *Quinceañera Style: Social Belonging and Latinx Consumer Identities*, by Rachel V. González, *Women's Studies in Communication (WSIC)*.

Leon-Boys, D. (2020). America's Favorite Doll?: Conflicting Discourses within the American Girl Collection. Book Review of *Playing With America's Doll: A Cultural Analysis of the American Girl Collection*, by Emilie Zaslow. *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 13(1).

Leon-Boys, D. (2019). Book Review of *In Search of Belonging: Latinas, Media, and Citizenship*, by Jillian M. Báez. *Feministas Unidas, INC.*, 39(2).

Works in Progress

Leon-Boys, D., & Valdivia, A.N. (Forthcoming). Twenty-first Century Disney Girlhoods: Targeting Latinidad through Post-feminist Narratives. In C. Mitchell (Ed.) *Transnational Girlhoods Series*. New York, NY: Berghahn Press.

Leon-Boys, D. *Flexible Latinidad and Girlhood: Exploring Ethnicity, Age, and Gender in Disney's Elena of Avalor*. Book Manuscript being developed for publication.

Leon-Boys, D. & Valdivia, A.N. Disney's Digital Toy Marketing: Addressing Latinxs through Displacement. Manuscript being prepared for International Journal of Communication.

**TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**University of South Florida

2020 Disney and the Politics of Popular Culture (COM 4931), Assistant Professor, Fall 2020, Department of Communication, Tampa, FL

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

2020 Introduction to Latina/Latino Studies (LLS 100) Instructor of Record, Summer 2020, Department of Latina/Latino Studies, Urbana-Champaign, IL

2019 Race, Gender, and Power (GWS 201) Instructor of Record, Fall 2019, Department of Gender and Women's Studies, Urbana-Champaign, IL

Introduction to Latina/Latino Studies (LLS 100) Instructor of Record, Summer 2019, Department of Latina of Latina/Latino Studies, Urbana-Champaign, IL

Introduction to Media Studies (MACS 101) Instructor of Record, Spring 2019, Media and Cinema Studies, Urbana-Champaign, IL

2016-2019 Research Assistant, Prof. Angharad N. Valdivia  
Project: *The Gender of Latinidad* book, Urbana-Champaign, IL

2018 Race, Gender, and the Body (LLS 387) Instructor of Record, Fall 2018, Department of Latina/Latino Studies, Urbana-Champaign, IL

2016- 2018 Graduate Mentor, Office of Minority Student Affairs, Urbana-Champaign, IL

2015- 2017 Graduate Academic Coach, Irwin Academics Center, Urbana-Champaign, IL

Gonzaga University

2018-2020 International and Intercultural Communication Online Course  
(COML 598) Instructor of Record, Master's in Communication  
and Leadership Studies, Spokane, WA

University of New Mexico

2013 Nonverbal Communication (C&J 323) Instructor of Record, Spring 2013,  
Department of Communication and Journalism, Albuquerque, NM

2012-2013 Public Speaking (C&J 130) Instructor of Record: Invitational Rhetoric,  
Department of Communication and Journalism, Albuquerque, NM

2011-2012 Public Speaking (C&J 130) Instructor of Record: Aristotelian Approach,  
Department of Communication and Journalism, Albuquerque, NM

**PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

2019 *Popular Culture and Communication for Survival in Latinx Contexts*. National  
Communication Association. Baltimore, MD. November

*Disney's Contemporary Latinx Animation: Latin America or U.S. Latinidad?* National  
Communication Association. Baltimore, MD. November

*Disney Girls: Disney Channel's U.S. Latina and Disney Junior's Latinoamericana*.  
2019 Ethnicity, Race, and Indigenous Peoples Conference. Spokane, WA. September

*Elena of Avalor: Girl Power or Domesticity?* Kentucky Gender and Women's Studies  
2019 Conference. Lexington, KY. September

*Disney's Digital Toy Marketing Addresses Latinxs*. International Communication  
Association. Washington, D.C. May

*From Flexible Latin American-ness to Specific Mexicanidad: Disney's Use of Strategic  
Ambiguity*. International Girls Studies Association. Notre Dame, IN. February

2018 *A Latina Princess Ready to Rule: The (Ethnic) Production of Elena of Avalor*.  
National Communication Association. Salt Lake City, UT. November

*Mamá PhD: Panel discussion*. National Communication Association. Salt Lake City,  
UT. November

*María Jesús Alvarado Rivera, Intersectional Feminism, and Trump's Abortion Ban  
For Girls in Immigration Custody*. National Communication Association. Salt Lake  
City, UT. November

*Vamos a Jugar: Mentorship and Social Bonding for the Latina/o/x Studies Division and La Raza Caucus: Panel discussion.* National Communication Association. Salt Lake City, UT. November

*Latinx Representation in Hollywood: Disney, Latinidad, and Representation.* Flow Conference at the University of Texas. Austin, TX. September

*Popular Culture Resistance through Language: Jane the Virgin Complicates Latinidad.* Union for Democratic Communication. Chicago, IL. May

2017 *Elena of Avalor: A Latina Princess & the Celebrity Praise for Disney's Diversification.* The National Women's Studies Association. Baltimore, MD. November

*"You Knew All of This. All Along": Race and Biopower in Black Mirror.* Midwest Popular Culture Association. St. Louis, MO. October

*Disney Invests in Youth of Color: Elena of Avalor in the Digital Age.* Interdisciplinary Encounters: Exploring Knowledge-Making Across Boundaries: UIUC Graduate Science and Technology Studies Workshop. Urbana-Champaign, IL. March

2016 *The Spanglish of the Narco State: Language Resistance in a Neoliberal Post-Racial Era.* International Association of Inter-American Studies. Santa Barbara, CA. October

*Mistaken Motherhood: Language as Identity Marker.* Latina/o Studies Association. Pasadena, CA. July

2011 *Positive Latina Portrayals?: Complexities in LaGuerta's Portrayal on Showtime's Dexter.* Eighth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry. Urbana-Champaign, IL. May

2010 *Latina Bodies: Hollywood Fairytale? Latinidad and Hybridity in Lingerie and Swimwear Ads.* National Communication Association. San Francisco, CA. November

*Broken Bridges: Activism and the Academy: Panel discussion.* National Communication Association. San Francisco, CA. November

## INVITED LECTURES, TALKS, AND INSTITUTES

2020 *Rethinking 20th Century Media Ethnography.* Invited Lecture to Institute of Communications Research Proseminar II. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. April

*Critical Discursive Analysis on Digital Platforms.* Invited Lecture to Introduction to Media Studies. University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign. February

*Navigating Intersectionality as a Scholar-Teacher.* Invited Lecture to Feminist Theory. California State University, San Marcos. February

2019 *Digital Audiences and Media Studies.* Invited Lecture to Introduction to Media Studies. University of Illinois, Urbana, Champaign. November

- Girls on T.V.: The Intersections of Race, Age, and Gender in Children's Television.* Invited Lecture to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Girl Up Chapter. October
- Disney Tames Girl Power and Hybridity through Elena of Avalor.* Dish it Up Lunch On Us Series, Women's Resource Center. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. September
- Combining Discursive, Digital, and Ethnographic Techniques in Qualitative Research: My Circuit of Culture Approach.* Invited Lecture to the Department of Education for Visualizing the Global Context. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. September
- What is Diversity? **Keynote Speaker*** for the Diversity and Inclusion Networking Exchange. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. April
- "La Primera Princesa Mexicana:" Disney's Use of Mexicanidad at California's Magic Kingdom Park.* Panelist for the Latina/Latino Studies Department Graduate Student Symposium. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. February
- Postfeminism and Disney.* Invited Lecture to Sex and Gender in Popular Media. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. February
- 2018 *Theme Parks as Sites of Audience Research.* Invited Lecture to Introduction to Media Studies. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. October
- Coco and Día de los Muertos through the Eyes of Disney.* Invited Lecture to Disney's Global Media. University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign. September
- Disney and Social Media.* Invited Lecture to Contemporary Rhetoric. University of Texas at El Paso. March
- Global Disney.* Invited Lecture to Interpersonal Communication. University of Texas at El Paso. March
- Exploring Graduate School.* Panelist for Careers in Economics. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. February
- 2017 *Disney's Latina Pre-Tween Audience: A Critical Discursive Analysis of Disney's First Latina Princess.* Dish it Up Lunch On Us Series, Women's Resource Center. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. December
- 2016 *Complicating Latina Portrayals: (Un)Veiling Invisible Racism in Dexter.* USC Annenberg's Summer Doctoral Institute for Diversity in Media and Culture. Los Angeles, CA. June
- Latinidad, Gender, and Popular Culture.* Community of Scholars Research Symposium Presenter. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. October
- 2015 *Success in LAS for International Students.* Presenter for Transfer Advantage, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. September

**AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

- 2020 Latinx Congratulatory Graduate Student Leadership Award, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- 2019-2020 Teacher Ranked as Excellent by their Students for Fall 2019, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- University of Illinois Institute of Communications Research Block Grant Fellowship (**highly competitive one-year full fellowship awarded to outstanding doctoral students, approx. \$20,000**) University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- 2019 Teacher Ranked as Excellent by their Students for Summer 2019, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- Teacher Ranked as Excellent by their Students for Spring 2019, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- 2018 Teacher Ranked as Excellent by their Students (**with outstanding instructor ratings**) for Fall 2018, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- ICR Fall 2018 Conference Travel Award, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL (\$400)
- ICR Student Summer Research Award, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL (\$1,000)
- 2015-2018 University of Illinois Distinguished Fellowship (**highly competitive three-year full fellowship, \$25,000/year**), University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- 2017 Lynne Blanton Student Travel Fund Award, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL (\$500)
- 2016 ICR Spring 2016 Conference Travel Award, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL (\$350)
- 2013 Outstanding Master's Student Award, Department of Communication and Journalism, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
- 2006-2008 Sarofim Scholarship in Theatre, Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX

**SERVICE**

*Professional Service, Journal and Conference Manuscript Reviews (ad hoc):*

- 2020 *Journal of Children and Media*, Manuscript Reviewer

- 2019-Present *International Girlhood Studies Association*, Postgraduate Research Representative
- 2017-2020 *Feminist Media Studies*, Manuscript Reviewer
- 2019-2020 *Latina/o Communication Studies Division and La Raza Caucus of the National Communication Association*, Secretary
- 2018-2020 *Latina/o Communication Studies Division and La Raza Caucus of the National Communication Association*, Member
- 2018-2019 *Latina/o Communication Studies Division and La Raza Caucus of the National Communication Association*, Submission Reviewer, Panel Proposals
- 2018-2019 *Latina/o Communication Studies Division and La Raza Caucus of the National Communication Association*, Chair, Conference Panels
- 2017-2018 *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Manuscript Reviewer

*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- 2019-Present Graduate Student Representative for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Strategic Planning Committee (Promoting Diversity and Inclusion Task Force), University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- 2017-Present Graduate Student Representative for College of Media's Diversity Committee, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- 2017 Community of Scholars Table Talk Facilitator, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- 2016 Community of Scholars Tour Guide, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- 2015 Community of Scholars Research Presenter, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL

*University of New Mexico*

- 2012 Graduate Student Search Committee Member for Lecturer II position in Multimedia Journalism, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque
- 2012 Graduate Student Representative for Graduate Admissions Committee, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque
- 2011 Graduate Student Representative for the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Graduate Professional Student Association, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque



## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Current:

- National Communication Association
- International Communication Association
- Latina/o Studies Association
- National Women's Studies Association
- NWSA Girls and Girls Studies Caucus
- International Girls Studies Association

Former:

- Graduate Professional Student Association (University of New Mexico)
- Raza Graduate Student Association (University of New Mexico)
- Western States Communication Association

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Academic Program Specialist

2013-2015

A Legacy of Giving

Austin, TX

- Presented/delivered academic assemblies to 20 schools in the Austin area (elementary-high school) about various topics dealing with philanthropy and social justice
- Contributed to curriculum writing and design, utilizing knowledge of relevant technological programs to support the creation of new visual lessons
- Worked with education committee to assist with plans for school recruitment, implementation, and expansion of program
- Created and managed positive relationships with all campus staff members and principals in assigned schools
- Co-created a new module about health and wellness, including lesson plans, white board animations, and after school activities for elementary, middle, and high school students

### Teaching Artist

2010-2011

Creative Action

Austin, TX

- Guided high school 'at-risk' students in the devising of original theatrical pieces
- Engaged high school students in dialogue concerning healthy teen relationships and teen dating violence
- Devised lesson plans and worked alongside other Theatre Action Project staff members in order to bolster the curriculum according to individual schools, grades, classrooms, etc.
- Supported the development of lesson plans/curricula with a stronger emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism

### Sportscaster / News Intern

2009 –2010

Univision Communications

Austin, TX

- Assisted in the conception and coordination of sports-related assignments for daily local news, including coverage of community based-sporting events
- Reported sports-related news stories from the field
- Collaborated with other sportscasters on writing stories for the newscast
- Edited and archived b-roll and news footage

**Promotions Assistant/ Community Affairs Assistant**

2007- 2010

Univision Communications

Austin, TX

- Collaborated with team to increase community awareness of Univision and their Latina/o/x outreach programs
- Worked alongside local Latina/o/x organizations in order to seek solutions to support the Latina/o/x community
- Co-organized 1<sup>st</sup> annual Copa Univision soccer tournament
- Translated commercials and Public Service Announcements from English to Spanish