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# The 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on the Americas

**An Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Conference**

**Sponsored by:**

The Americas Council, University System of Georgia  
University of North Georgia  
University of Georgia  
Georgia State University Perimeter College  
Georgia Gwinnett College



**Hosted by:**  
University of North Georgia  
Mike Cottrell College of Business &  
College of Arts & Letters

**Venue: University of North Georgia – Dahlonega Campus  
Mike Cottrell College of Business  
82 College Circle, Dahlonega, GA 30597**

**Friday & Saturday, February 20 & 21**

**2026**

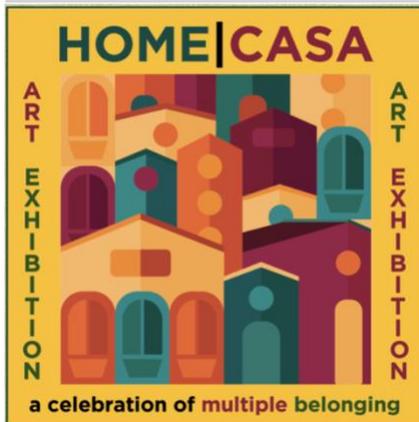
# 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on the Americas

## DAY 1

**Friday, February 20, 2026**

**Check-in at Registration Desk: Cottrell Business Center –  
Next to the Ballroom - First Floor from 11:00 a.m.**

**11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Special Session Library Technology Center  
First Floor and Room 382**



### **Where is Home for Me? Hispanic and Filipino Student Artists at the *Home|Casa* Art Exhibition A Celebration of Multiple Belonging**

**Chairs:** *Dr. Ana Pozzi Harris and Mr. Kyle Murphy, University of North Georgia*

**Student Panel:** *Ms. Jazlin Lugo, Ms. Daniela Bayardo Nassar, Ms. Evelyn Magaña, Ms. Arely Marquez, Ms. Katelyn Aquino, Ms. Sara Courtney, Ms. Denise Gomez-del Rio*

**1:00 – 2:15 pm Session 1A Room: Cottrell 276**

#### **Regional Economics and Trade Issues**

**Chair:** *Dr. Clemente Quiñones-Reyes, Georgia Gwinnett College*

**Can Guyana avoid the Resource Paradox? A review of the country's efforts to transform its Natural Resource Wealth into long-term sustainable growth**

*Dr. Donna Danns, University of North Georgia*

**The Impact of Credit Information Reforms: Evidence from Latin America and the Caribbean**

*Dr. Kamilah Williams, University of North Georgia*

**The Geometry of Latin American Trade**

*Dr. Cristian Harris, University of North Georgia*

**1:00 – 2:15 pm**

**Session 1B**

**Room: Cottrell 319**

**Language and Linguistics I**

**Chair: Dr. Kristi Hislope, University of North Georgia**

**Complexities of Language Teaching in Uruguay's Public Schools: A Fulbrighter's Experience**

*Prof. Barbara Hall, Perimeter College/Georgia State University*

**Sociolinguistic Footprints of Asian Languages Across Latin America and the Caribbean**

*Mr. Eric Kendrick, Georgia State University - Perimeter College*

**Grammatical convergence of Spanish and English by simultaneous bilingual children in Georgia (USA)**

*Dr. Daniel Smith, Clemson University*

**Syntactic shift in the Andes: an apparent-time analysis of predicate constituent order variation in Quechua-Spanish Bilinguals**

*Dr. Sarah Hubbel, University of North Georgia*

**1:00 – 2:15 pm**

**Session 1C**

**Room: Cottrell 320**

**Pen Pals, 2.0: Building Multicultural Knowledge through Virtual Exchange Partnerships**

**Chair: Mrs. Stephanie Langston, Georgia State University, Perimeter College**

**Panelists**

*Mrs. Stephanie Langston, Georgia State University, Perimeter College*

*Dr. Deborah Manson, Georgia State University, Perimeter College*

*Dr. David Yenerall, Georgia State University, Perimeter College*

***Coffee Break***

**2:15 pm – 3:00 pm: Cottrell Business Center First Floor**

***Poster Presentation***

**2:15 – 3:00 pm; Cottrell Business Center – First Floor**

***Efficacy of pro-bono genetics and neurology clinics in an under-resourced Caribbean nation***

*Mr. Trey Orndorff, AU/UGA Medical Partnership*

**3:00 – 4:15 pm**

**Session 2A**

**Room: Cottrell 320**

**Migration and Immigration Issues in the Americas**

**Chair: Dr. Jeff Pardue, University of North Georgia**

**The Deportation of the Caribbean Diasporas from the United States**

*Prof. George Danns, University of North Georgia*

**Oil and economic migration in Guyana: Exploring lived experiences and public perceptions of Venezuelans and “others” in the media sphere**

*Dr. Carolyn Walcott, Clayton State University*

**Explaining Latin America Migration, 1960-2025: An Empirical Application of Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach**

*Dr. Clemente Quiñones-Reyes, Georgia Gwinnett College*

**U.S Foreign Policy and Its Likely Impact on the Polarization of Latin America and the Caribbean**

*Prof. Sabella Abidde, Alabama State University*

**3:00 – 4:15 pm**

**Session 2 B**

**Room: Cottrell 341**

**Arts, Language and Literature I**

**Chair: Dr. Jaime Salinas, University of North Georgia**

**Racial trauma and the Vietnam War: a visual culture context for Luis Jiménez's Tank-Spirit of Chicago (1968)**

*Dr. Ana Pozzi Harris, University of North Georgia*

**From Matehuala to Lake Alfred: a Tale of Immigration and Legacy**

*Dr. Gordon McNeer, University of North Georgia*

**Horror and Capitalism in Puerto Rico - Gabino Iglesias’ House of Bone and Rain**

*Dr. Dorian Lee Jackson, Kennesaw State University*

**Devil’s Island: The Long Shadow of Film Makers’ Paradise**

*Dr. Shane Emplaincourt, University of North Georgia*

**3:00 – 4:15 pm**

**Session 2 C**

**Room: Cottrell 374**

**Teaching Paradigms I**

**Chair: Dr. Amy Baldwin, UGA School of Medicine & Augusta University / University of Georgia Medical Partnership**

**Science in Action: How Rising 4th and 5th Graders Learn and Use Science in a Summer Program**

*Dr. Max Vazquez Dominguez, University of North Georgia*

**Introducing Freshman Students to International Cultural and Professional Considerations**  
*Dr. Sonia J. García and Dr. David E. Stooksbury, University of Georgia*

**Qué drama ser migrante!: Drama as Dialogue and Pedagogical Praxis**  
*Prof. Ericka H. Parra, Valdosta State University*

**3:00 – 4:15 pm**

**Session 2 D**

**Room: Cottrell 379**

**Latin American Studies: Theories, Philosophy and Cultures**

**Chair: Dr. Cristian Harris, University of North Georgia**

**Backlash to Law and Reform in Latin America during the Pink Tide Era: A Perspective from Self-Determination Theory**  
*Dr. Ronnie Grant, University of North Georgia*

**Toward a Theology of Post-Liberation**  
*Dr. Alfredo Poggi, University of North Georgia*

**The Price of Sovereignty: An Evolution of Criminal Jurisdiction in “Indian Country”**  
*Dr. Fred Knowles, Valdosta State University*

**Domestic Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Cultural Responses**  
*Prof. Brenda Gill, Alabama State University and Ms. Nyla Clark-Smith, Alabama State University*

**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: PEER MENTORING**

3:00 – 4:15 pm

**Room: Cottrell 420**

**Sponsoring faculty: Dr. Efren Velazquez**

***Peer Mentor Program and Student Success: Hispanic student peer mentors sharing their experience serving as mentors and discussing the importance of having a peer mentor program for Hispanic freshmen.***

**Students: Ms. Angela Aguirre, Ms. Albany Zavarce Angulo, Mr. Juan Hernandez, Ms. Jacqueline Romagoza, Ms. Magdalena Villalobos Barajas, Ms. Lesly Zuniga.**  
**University of North Georgia**

***Coffee Break***

**4:15 pm – 4:30 pm: Cottrell Business Center First Floor**

**4:30 – 5:45 pm**

**Session 3 A**

**Room: Cottrell 234**

**Geographic, Agricultural and Environmental Issues**

**Chair: Prof. Brenda Gill, Alabama State University**

**The Argentine Antarctic Program and Its International Collaborations**

*Dr. Georgeta Connor, Georgia Gwinnett College*

**Trends in East Pacific Hurricanes from 1975-2025**

*Dr. Jamie Mitchem, University of North Georgia*

**Cleansing Soils, Replacing Plastics, Feeding the Planet: The South Georgia Hemp Pilot**

*Dr. Lilia Lizama, Maya Heritage Center and Dr. Rocio Palomares, Harvest Fresh Farms, LLC*

**Master Planning, Cultural Preservation, and Sustainable Agriculture: Advancing the Maya Heritage Center and the Virtual Mesoamerican Polytechnic Institute**

*Dr. Lilia Lizama and Eng. Laureano Gonzalez (Maya Heritage Center)*

**4:30 – 5:45 pm**

**Session 3 B**

**Room: Cottrell 272**

**Religion, Culture and Identity**

**Chair: Dr. Evie Munier, University of North Georgia**

**Religion and Anti-Colonialism: Liberation Theology in One Hundred Years of Solitude**

*Ms. Anna Mathis, University of North Georgia*

**Peruvian Culture and Identity Through Gastronomy**

*Mr. David Park, University of North Georgia*

**Writing Through Rupture: Nuns' Writings in 18th-Century Santiago de Chile**

*Ms. Elyse Conley, Pennsylvania State University*

**4:30 – 5:45 pm**

**Session 3 C**

**Room: Cottrell 374**

**Crafting and Contesting Identities in the Americas through Ecclesiastical, Legal, and Popular Memory Sources**

**Chair: Dr. Tamara Spike, University of North Georgia**

**Carabalies in Cuba: From the Bight of Biafra to the Bay of Havana**

*Dr. Matt Childs, University of South Carolina*

**Crafting Legal Claims in a Colonial Divorce Court**

*Dr. Alexander Wisnoski, University of North Georgia*

**From Haiti to Oklahoma: Memory and the Black Revolutionary Tradition**

*Dr. Erica Johnson, Francis Marion University*

**Gender, Health and Social Realities**

Chair: Dr. Alfredo Poggi, Univeristy of North Georgia

**Where the “First World” Falls Behind: An Intersectional Comparative Study of Discourse Surrounding Violence Against Women in the US and Mexico**

*Ms. Brianna Litz, University of North Georgia*

**Influenza Burden and Seasonality in Guatemala: Insight from VICO Surveillance, 2008–2018**

*Dr. Sadaf Jehangir, University of Georgia*

**Improving Spanish-Language Access to Women’s Heart Health Resources Through UX and Engagement Analysis.**

*Ms. Aidan Pavlich, University of North Georgia*

**Realismo social y marginalidad en La vendedora de rosas (1998)**

*Mr. Christopher Easterbrook, Clemson University*

**CONFERENCE RECEPTION**

**6:00pm - 7:30pm: Cottrell Ballroom**

Remarks by Dr. Rachel Clapp-Smith  
Dean, Mike Cottrell College of Business

Introduction of Dean  
Dr. Donna Danns – Professor of Economics

Entertainment by *Grupo Jalisco*

*A Celebration of  
Latin America and the Caribbean*

# Day 2

**Saturday, February 21, 2026**

**9:00 – 10:15 am**

**Session 4A**

**Room: Cottrell 272**

## Research-Related Teaching Challenges & Opportunities

**Chair: Dr. Melany Chambers, Oglethorpe University**

**Research-Related Teaching Challenges & Opportunities**

*Dr. Melany Chambers, Oglethorpe University*

**Communication and Media: Research-Related Teaching Challenges & Opportunities**

*Dr. Carolyn Walcott, Clayton State University*

**Migration studies: Research-Related Teaching Challenges & Opportunities**

*Dr. Coreen Jacobs-Chester, University of Guyana*

**Tourism: Research-Related Teaching Challenges & Opportunities**

*Dr. Coleen Patterson, University of Guyana*

**9:00 – 10:15 am**

**Session 4B**

**Room: Cottrell 274**

## How Culture and Narrative Shape Identity, Belonging, and Social Meaning Across the Americas

**Chair: Prof. Maria Jose Maguire, University of North Georgia**

**Language, Culture and the Miskito Identity in Nicaragua**

*Prof. Maguire Maria Jose, University of North Georgia*

**Integrando personajes hispanos de ficción para enseñar lengua y cultura**

*Dr. Luis Mora, Georgia Gwinnett College*

**Taiwanese and Chinese Immigration to Argentina: A Historical Overview**

*Prof. Nicolas Hu, University of North Georgia*

**Pachucos in Atlanta during the 1960s**

*Dr. Andres Hajar, Georgia Gwinnett College*

**9:00 – 10:15 am**

**Session 4C**

**Room: Cottrell 276**

## Arts, Language and Culture

**Chair: Dr. Olivier Le Blond, University of North Georgia**

**Alfredo da Silva and the Potosino Landscape in Flux**

*Mr. Tomas Curcio, University of Florida*

**Generational Trauma and Healing in Lorraine Ávila’s Short Story “Mi’ja”**

*Ms. Yasmin Paiva de Siqueira, The University of Georgia*

**Language, Culture, and Learning Styles: Examining the Impact of Chochoan Cultural Identities on English Learning Dynamics**

*Mr. Jonny Lopez, University of Florida*

**9:00 – 10:15 am**

**Session 4D**

**Room: Cottrell 319**

**Teaching Paradigms II**

Chair: Dr. Max Vazquez Dominguez, University North Georgia

**Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Learning through Structured Reflection: The Cuba Experience**

*Dr. Maria Navarro, University of Georgia*

**Encounters of Languages, Cultures, and Identities: Code-switching among HBCU Students in a Study Abroad Program in Costa Rica**

*Dr. Irina Tedrick, University of South Carolina*

**The Impact of Place Attachment in the Socioscientific Reasoning of Puerto Rican Students After Evaluating Socioscientific Issues**

*Dr. Lorraine Ramirez Villarin, University of North Georgia*

**How Study Away Experience Affects Perspectives and Approach to Medical School**

*Dr. Amy Baldwin and Ms. Soren Mais*

*UGA School of Medicine and Augusta University / University of Georgia Medical Partnership*

**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: ACTIVE LEARNING**

**9:00 – 10:15 a.m.; Room: Cottrell 320**

Sponsoring faculty: **Drs. Tamara Spike, Erin Bush, Alexander Wisnoski**

***Perspectives on Active Learning in the History of the Americas Classroom***

Students: Mr. Sergio Monterroso-Ortega, Ms. Sara Courtney, Mr. Joshua Martin,  
Mr. Jackson Carne, Ms. Cara Allen, Ms. Angelica Rivera

**University of North Georgia**

# Coffee Break

**10:15 – 10:45 am; Cottrell Business Center First Floor**

**10:45 am – 12:00 pm**

**Session 5A**

**Room: Cottrell 272**

## Arts, Music and Culture

**Chair: Dr. Donna Danns, University of North Georgia**

**Popular Culture as Activism: Responding to Act 22 and Gentrification in Puerto Rico**

*Dr. Nerisha Padilla Cruz, Perimeter College-Georgia State University*

**A Case Study of Preludio 11 (Kurt Maetzig, 1963), a Cuban-East German Co-production**

*Dr. Magdalena Matuskova, Clemson University*

**Solitude / Soledad in Mercedes Sosa, The "Voice" of Latin America**

*Dr. Rudyard Alcocer, University of Tennessee*

**English Proficiency and the Success of Latino Musicians during and post COVID 19-Era in the United States**

*Dr. Ying Zhen, Wesleyan College*

**10:45 am – 12:00 pm**

**Session 5B**

**Room: Cottrell 274**

## Arts, Language and Literature II

**Chair: Dr. Sarah Hubbel, University of North Georgia**

**Jorge Luis Borges' Vibrant Materials**

*Dr. Derek Beaudry, University of North Georgia*

**Fiction as Mirror: Social Commentary from Los cuentos de Eva Luna**

*Prof. Eric Kartchner, Georgia Southern University*

**Towards a Regenerative Cosmopolitanism: The Body, the Local and the World in 21st Century Bolivian Literature**

*Dr. Zoya Khan, University of South Alabama*

**Modernidad inquietante: lo nuevo extraño y las fracturas del imaginario boliviano en El horizonte del grito, de Maximiliano Barrientos**

*Dr. Jaime Salinas, University of North Georgia*

**10:45 am – 12:00 pm**

**Session 5C**

**Room: Cottrell 276**

**Language and Linguistics II**

**Chair: Ms. Seaira Lett, University of Georgia**

**Documenting temporal expression in Chuj and why it matters**

*Ms. Seaira Lett, University of Georgia*

**Documenting the Semantic Variation of Navajo Pluractionality**

*Mr. Britton Hare, University of Georgia*

**Plurality in Salvadoran Nawat**

*Mr. Casen Stiber, University of Georgia*

**10:45 am – 12:00 pm**

**Session 5D**

**Room: Cottrell 319**

**Culture and Policy**

**Chair: Prof. Nicolas Hu, University of North Georgia**

**Plagues as Punishment - Samanta Schweblin's Continuation of Cultural Latin American Narratives**

*Ms. Emma Wilson, Furman University*

**Colombia's comparative defense**

*Mr. Nicolas Zamudio, University of North Georgia*

**The impact of national environmental governance policies on indigenous communities: A case study of the Ecuadorian Amazon**

*Ms. Nilofer Bharwani, Kennesaw State University*

**Exploring Agroecological Communication Through the Slow Food Farms Model**

*Ms. Laura Beatriz Montes de Oca Vazquez, University of Georgia, and Dr. Maria Navarro, University of Georgia*

***12:15 pm: Lunch – Cottrell Ballroom***

***Announcement & Presentation of Student Paper Competition Award Winners***

**Co-Chairs:** *Dr. Alvaro Torres-Calderon, Dr. Kristi Hislope, Dr. Donna Danns,  
Dr. George Danns & M.A. Maria Jose Maguire (University of North Georgia)*

**Remarks:** *Dr. Amy Baldwin, Chair of the Americas Council and Professor, UGA School of Medicine and Augusta University / University of Georgia Medical Partnership*

## ***CLOSING PLENARY SESSION***

**Introduction of Plenary Speaker:** *Dr. George Danns, Professor of Sociology,  
University of North Georgia*

### **CONFERENCE ON THE AMERICAS CLOSING PLENARY**

**Dr. Cecilia Menjívar**

*Distinguished Professor of Sociology,  
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)*

**Latin America at a Crossroads: What Can We Learn  
About it and from it?**

**1:15 - 2:15 P.M.**

**Cottrell Ballroom**

## About Prof. Cecilia Menjivar



*Cecilia Menjivar is Distinguished Professor of Sociology at UCLA and holds the Dorothy L. Meier Social Equities Chair. Previously, she was a Foundation Distinguished Professor at the University of Kansas and a Cowden Distinguished Professor at Arizona State University. Her research focuses on immigration from Central America to the United States and gender-based violence in Central America, with particular attention to how state power operates through laws, policies, and bureaucracies. She has examined how immigration enforcement and legal status shape immigrants' lives, including gender and generational relations, social networks, and religious communities.*

*Professor Menjivar is the author or editor of 20 books and volumes and has published over 200 articles, chapters, and essays. Her scholarship has received numerous honors, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Carnegie Fellowship, and multiple awards from the American Sociological Association (ASA). She has served as Vice President (2015) and President (2022) of the ASA. In recent years, she was elected a W.E.B. Du Bois Fellow of the American Academy of Political and Social Science and received the ASA's Jessie Bernard Award and Public Understanding of Sociology Award. In 2021, she was named a Social Justice Hero by the Museum of Social Justice in Los Angeles.*

*-Vote of Thanks-*

**End of the Conference**

**2:30 – 3:30 p.m. The Americas Council Meeting**

# Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to the University of North Georgia administrators, faculty, staff, and students; the members of the Americas Council; the presenters, session chairs, panelists, and other participants; and the many individuals whose generous support, time, and commitment made the 29th Annual Conference on the Americas possible.

University of North Georgia administrators once again encouraged the hosting of this conference and provided steadfast support at every level. We extend our sincere thanks to the University's President, **Dr. Michael Shannon**, for his continued encouragement of interdisciplinary and intercultural engagement. We are also grateful to **Dr. Chaudron Gille**, Provost; **Dr. Rachel Clapp-Smith**, Dean of the Mike Cottrell College of Business; and **Dr. Elisabeth Burgess**, Dean of the College of Arts & Letters, for hosting the conference and for their invaluable logistical and institutional support.

We thank **Mr. Clark Leonard**, Director of News & Communications, for his assistance in promoting the conference; **Mr. Ohki Komoto**, Director of Web Communications, for his detailed attention to creating and maintaining the conference website; and **Mrs. Melinda Rubke** for her assistance in promoting the conference across campus and on the University's webpage. We also appreciate the support of **Mr. Kyle Murphy**, Associate Director of the Center for Student Engagement and Leadership, and **Ms. Karen Andrews**, Director of University Events and the students of the Spanish Club - Dahlonega. We are grateful to Dining Services–Dahlonega Campus and its team, as well as to Parking and Transportation Services and the Dahlonega Campus Police for their support. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of many other faculty and staff whose behind-the-scenes efforts were essential to the planning, organization, and successful execution of the conference.

We extend our appreciation to the members of the Americas Council - **Dr. Amy Baldwin, Dr. Luise Strange de Soria, Dr. Chad Howe, and Dr. Clemente Quiñones-Reyes** - for their leadership, guidance, and ongoing commitment to advancing scholarship and dialogue across the Americas. We are also thankful to the judges of the student paper competition for their time and careful consideration. We are especially grateful for the invaluable advice, guidance, and support provided by **Dr. Luise Strange de Soria**, Secretary of the Americas Council.

A special note of thanks goes to the students of the University of North Georgia and participating institutions whose engagement, presentations, and attendance enriched the conference experience. Their scholarship and enthusiasm are central to the mission of the Conference on the Americas. A heartfelt thank you to all session chairs, presenters, panelists, and roundtable participants for the quality, rigor, and diversity of their contributions. We also thank all conference attendees for fostering a collegial and intellectually vibrant environment throughout the two days of the conference.

Finally, we extend our deepest appreciation to our closing plenary speaker, **Dr. Cecilia Menjivar**, for graciously accepting our invitation and for her timely, insightful, and thought-provoking address.

*Alvaro Torres-Calderón, Ph.D., Associate Department Head of Modern Languages*

*Kristi Hislope, Ph.D., Department Head of Modern Languages*

*Donna E. Danns, Ph.D., Professor of Economics*

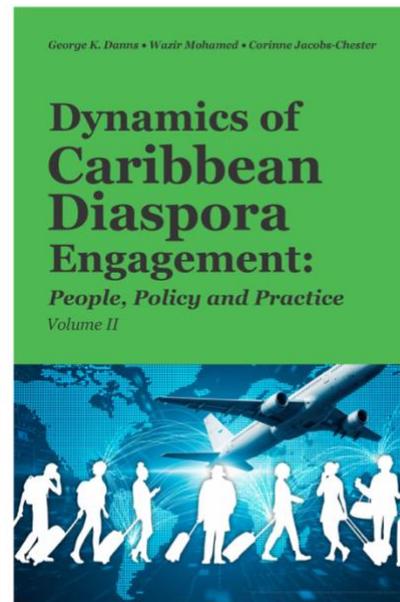
*George K. Danns, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology*

*Maria Jose Maguire, M.A., Lecturer of Spanish*

**Conference Co-Chairs** - University of North Georgia

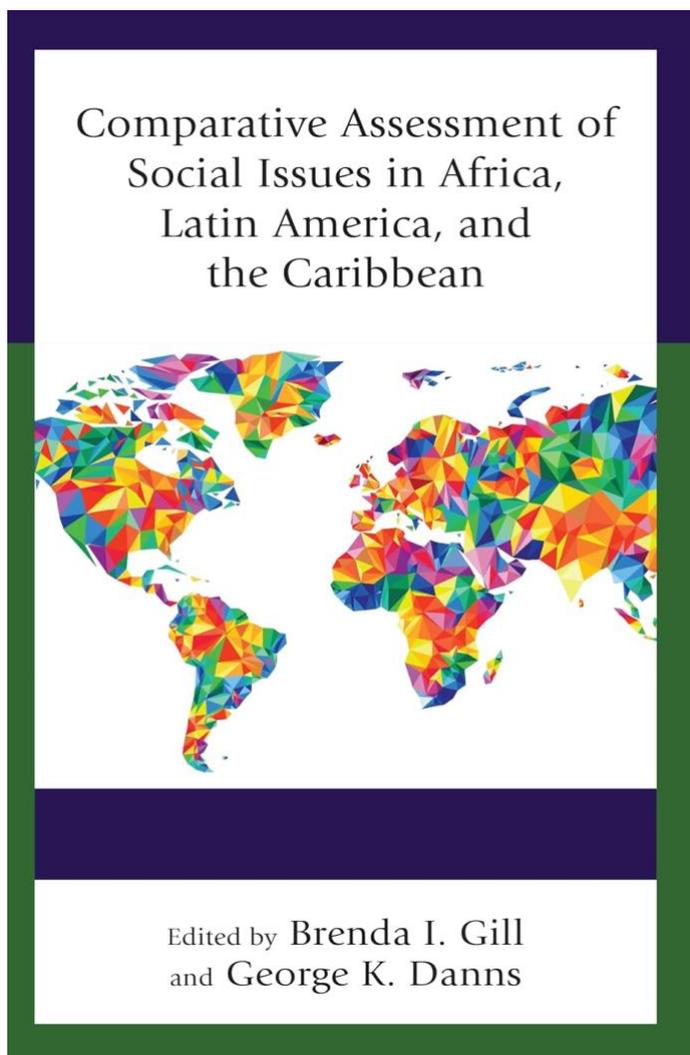
## Recent Books by presenters at the 29th Annual Conference on the Americas

- ▶ University of Guyana Press.  
Forthcoming 2026
- ▶ Editors: George K. Danna, Wazir  
Mohamed, Coreen Jacobs  
Chester



## Recent Books by presenters at the 29th Annual Conference on the Americas

### Comparative Assessment of Social Issues in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean



Edited by Brenda I. Gill and George K. Dannels

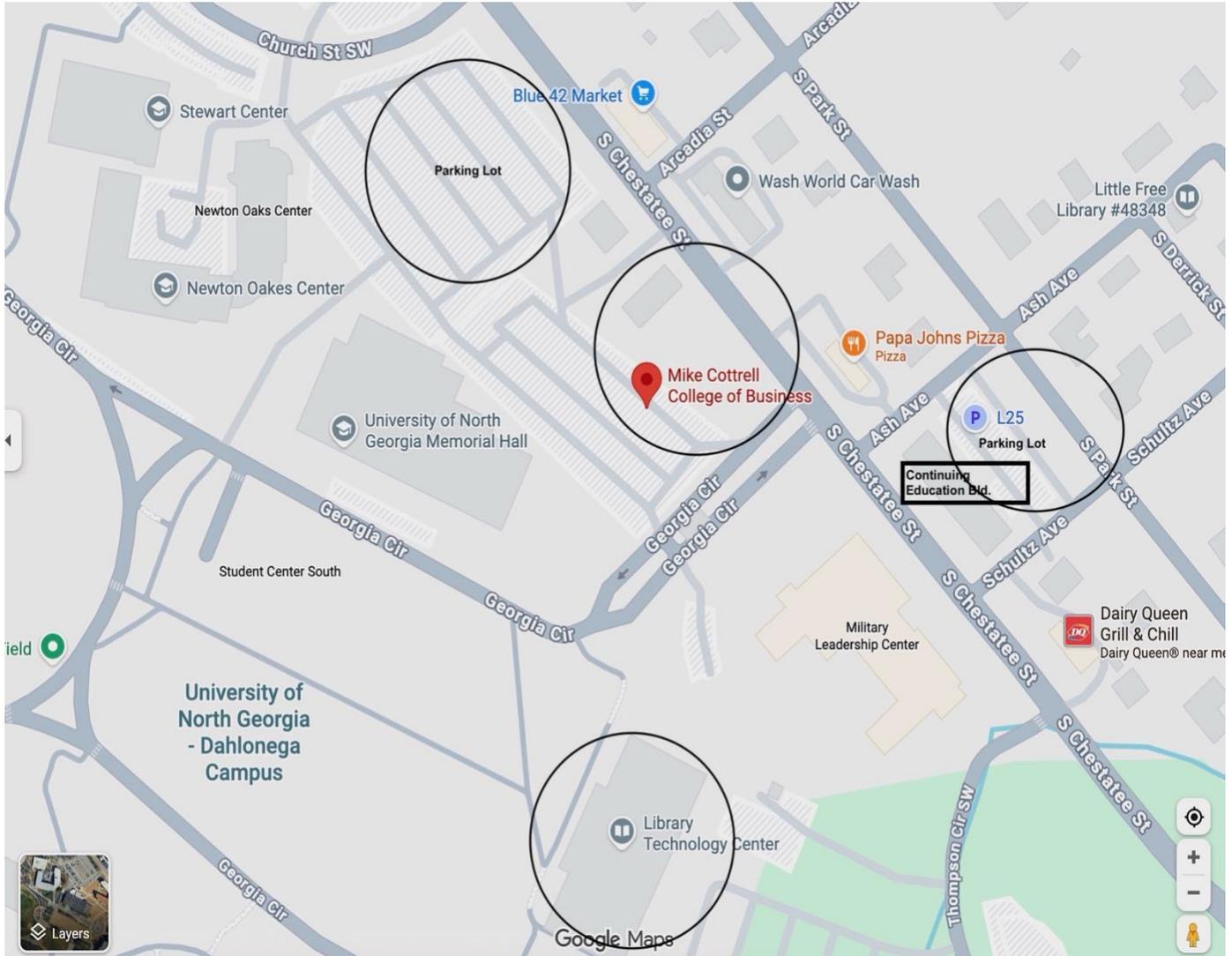
**Contributors:**

Brenda I. Gill, George K. Dannels, Ivon Alcime, Augustine Avwunudiogba, Fagdéba A. Bakoyéma, Garfield Barnwell, Leonard Sitji Bombom, Dennis C. Canterbury, Donna E. Dannels, Elisha J. Dung, Alecia D. Hoffman, Lynn D. Schneider, Randolph Williams

Using a comparative framework, this edited volume evaluates pressing social issues facing African, Latin American, and Caribbean countries. Unique in its comparative and multi-regional perspective, this book provides a scholastic and practical understanding on questions ranging from governance and security to poverty, inequality, and population health.



# University of North Georgia Dahlonega campus



**Interactive Map:**  
<https://ung.edu/campuses/dahlonega/maps-directions.php>

- “Circles indicate where the conference will take place and where guests may park on Feb. 20 and 21 (Mike Cottrell’s, Library, and Continuing Ed parking lots).”