

# Diana Leon-Boys

University of South Florida • Department of Communication  
4202 E. Fowler Ave. Tampa, FL. 33620-7800  
dleonboys@usf.edu • www.dleonboys.com

---

## 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, University of South Florida, Tampa  
Affiliate Assistant Professor, Department of Women’s and Gender Studies, University of South Florida, Tampa  
Affiliate Assistant Professor, Institute for the Study of Latin America and the Caribbean, University of South Florida, Tampa

## LANGUAGES

English and Spanish (Native Fluency)

## 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. (2021). Disney's Specific and Ambiguous Princess: A Discursive Analysis of *Elena of Avalor*. Special Issue: IGSA@ND. *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 14(2).

Leon-Boys, D. (2021). 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* 10(2): 50-58.

Leon-Boys, D. & Chávez, C. (2021). Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge as Postcolonial Fantasy: Disney, Labor, and the Renegotiation of Border Discourses. *International Journal of Communication*. 15(1). 2378-2396.

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). 218-232.

### Book Chapters (Peer Reviewed)

Leon-Boys, D. & Valdivia, A.N. (Forthcoming) *Media and Minority Children*. In D. Lemish (Ed.) *Routledge International Handbook of Children, Adolescents, and Media*. U.K.: Routledge.

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. (2021). 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 of Commodity Activism. 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. *Princesa of the Periphery: Disney's Flexible Latina Girl*. Book manuscript under contract with Rutgers University Press.

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. & Valdivia, A.N. Disney's Digital Toy Marketing: Addressing Latinxs through Displacement. Manuscript being prepared for *Childhood*.

Leon-Boys, D. & Bucciferro, C. The Teenage Latina Genius on Television: Netflix's *Ashley Garcia*. Manuscript being prepared for *Feminist Media Studies*.

## **TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### University of South Florida

2021 Latina/o/x Media Studies (COM 4931), Assistant Professor, Spring 2021, Department of Communication, Tampa, FL

2020-2021 Disney and the Politics of Popular Culture (COM 4931), Assistant Professor, Fall 2020/Spring 2021, 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

**GRADUATE STUDENT COMMITTEES**

Hannah/Bishop Lay, Doctoral Student, Topic: Representation in Horror and Science Fiction  
Films and Television.

Camille Ruiz Mangual, Master's Student, "Analyzing Latina/x Identity in *One Day at a Time*."  
Thesis Defended Spring 2021.

Spencer Margulies, Master's Student, "Identity Formation Within Liminal Spaces." Thesis  
Defended Spring 2021.

**GRANTS, AWARDS, HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS**

2021 Humanities Institute Summer Grant, Funding for the book project: *Princesa of the  
Periphery: Disney's Flexible Latina Girl*, University of South Florida (\$5,000)

2020 Outstanding Dissertation Award, Critical Cultural Studies Division, National  
Communication Association

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

### **PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

2021 *A Party for All: Analyzing the New Mediated Quinceañera, Gendered Nostalgia, and the (In)Visibility of Latinidad*. Cultural Studies Association. Chicago/virtual. June

2020 *Crossroads, Opportunities, and Challenges in Latinx Media*. National Communication Association. Indianapolis/virtual. November

*Disney's Galaxy's Edge: Race, Capitol, and the Renegotiation of the Western Frontier Narrative*. Top Paper Panel for the Latino/Latina Communication Studies Division. National Communication Association. Indianapolis/virtual. November

*Teaching Communication Through Accessible Media, Reflection, and Dialogue*. National Communication Association. Indianapolis/virtual. November

- Brilliant Latinas Go to Mars: Latina Girl Visibility Through Post-Feminist Ambiguity.* National Communication Association. Indianapolis/virtual. November.
- 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

- 2021 *A Party for All: Analyzing the New Mediated Quinceañera, Gendered Nostalgia, and the (In)Visibility of Latinidad*. Invited Lecture to Women's and Gender Studies Brown Bag. University of South Florida. April
- Stuck in the Middle of Mainstream Media Discourses*. Invited Lecture to Media and Culture Theory. West Chester University of Pennsylvania. April
- 2020 *Latinidad in the Digital Age: Disney's Engagements with a Flexible Latinidad*. Invited Lecture to The University of Iowa's School of Journalism and Mass Communication's Visiting Scholars Program. October
- "We Are Not Invisible": Recognizing Latinx/ Latin Americans' Accomplishments and Challenges in Higher Education*. Invited Speaker to the Institute for the Study of Latin American and the Caribbean (ISLAC)'s Hispanic Heritage Month Conversation. University of South Florida. October
- Rethinking 20<sup>th</sup> 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

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

- 2020 *International Journal of Communication*, Manuscript Reviewer
- 2020 *Journal of Children and Media*, Manuscript Reviewer
- 2020 *Comunicación y Medios*, Manuscript Reviewer
- 2019-Present *International Girlhood Studies Association*, Postgraduate Research Representative
- 2019-2021 *Latina/o Communication Studies Division and La Raza Caucus of the National Communication Association*, Secretary
- 2018-Present *Latina/o Communication Studies Division and La Raza Caucus of the National Communication Association*, Submission Reviewer, Panel Proposals
- 2017-2020 *Feminist Media Studies*, Manuscript Reviewer
- 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*, Chair, Conference Panels
- 2017-2018 *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Manuscript Reviewer

University of South Florida

2020- Present Faculty Senate Member

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