UCLA Freemasonry and Civil Society Program

The Freemasonry and Civil Society Program is a collaborative partnership between UCLA’s History Department, the Grand Lodge of California, and the Institute for Masonic Studies. The Program offers courses investigating the history of Freemasonry within the context of civil society. Each year, the Program sponsors a post-doctoral fellow and a research assistant. The International Conference on American & Latin American Freemasonry is offered in conjunction with the research of this year’s post-doctoral fellow, María Eugenia Vázquez-Semadini, whose specialties include Mexican political culture in the nineteenth century and the history of Freemasonry.

International Conference on American & Latin American Freemasonry:
A new past & A new future

Sponsored by the Grand Lodge of California’s Institute for Masonic Studies and the University of California, Los Angeles
Agenda

9:30 am  Welcome & Introductions
- Senior Grand Warden John Cooper, Masons of California; Grand Master Frank Loui, Masons of California; Margaret C. Jacob, PhD, UCLA; & María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni, PhD, UCLA

9:50 am  Where We Now Are in Masonic Studies
- Margaret C. Jacob, PhD, UCLA

Utopia and Reality of Masonic Liberalism: From the Courts of Cadiz to Mexican Independence
- José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, PhD, University of Zaragoza

11:45 pm  Lunch

12:30 pm  Origins and Development of Freemasonry in Cuba
- Eduardo Torres Cuevas, PhD, University of Havana

Challenges and Characteristics of Cuban Freemasons in the 20th Century: A Demographic Approach
- Jorge Luis Romeu, PhD, Syracuse University

2:00 pm  Break

2:10 pm  The Relation Among Freemasonry, State, and Catholic Church in Central America; Formation of the Secular States in Latin America
- Miguel Guzmán-Stein, PhD, University of Costa Rica

Mystical Sociability: Freemasons and Theosophists in the Organization of Co-Freemasonry and the Liberal Catholic Church in Costa Rica During the 1920’s
- Ricardo Eugenio Martínez Esquivel, University of Costa Rica

3:30 pm  Break

3:40 pm  American Origins of Mexican Freemasonry
- María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni, PhD, UCLA

The Relation Between Mexican and American Freemasonry, Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries
- Guillermo De Los Reyes-Heredia, PhD, University of Houston

5:00 pm  Closing Remarks

Speaker Biographies

José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, PhD, specializes in the history of Freemasonry in Spain and Hispanic America, and has published more than 500 scholarly papers and 47 books on the topic. He founded, and is lifelong president of honor for, the Center for Historical Studies on Spanish Freemasonry.

Eduardo Torres Cuevas, PhD, is a philosophy professor at the University of Havana. He is director of the José Martí National Library of Cuba and the Cuban Academy of History, and has published several books about the history of Cuban Freemasonry.

Ricardo Eugenio Martínez Esquivel, professor of History and Research at the University of Costa Rica, specializes in Freemasonry and Theosophy in Central America. He is director of REHMLAC (Journal for the Study of Latin American and Caribbean Masonry), the publication of the Program for Historical Studies of Masonry, Para-Masonic Societies, and Patriotic Societies in Central America.

Miguel Guzmán-Stein, PhD, professor of History of Culture at the University of Costa Rica, researches the history of Freemasonry in Costa Rica and Central America, and relations between U.S. and Latin American Freemasonry. He is a founding member of REHMLAC and directs the Central American Program of Research on Historical Studies of Freemasonry.

Margaret C. Jacob, PhD, professor of History at UCLA, is one of the world’s foremost Masonic scholars. Dr. Jacob specializes in Masonic history, intellectual history, and the history of science. Her research includes the Enlightenment, movement of people and ideas among nations, political theory, and the rise of radical and republican sentiments.

Guillermo De Los Reyes-Heredia, PhD, is an associate professor of Latin American Cultures and Literatures at the University of Houston, where he is director of Undergraduate Studies. Dr. De Los Reyes’ research includes Freemasonry in Latin America and Colonial Mesoamerica, gender and sexuality, and Latin American popular culture.

Jorge Luis Romeu, PhD, is a research professor at Syracuse University, specializing in industrial statistics. His studies include demographic research on Cuban Freemasons in the 20th century.

María Eugenia Vázquez Semadeni, PhD, is an assistant professor and visiting fellow at UCLA. Founder of the Center of Historical Studies on Latin American and Caribbean Freemasonry, Dr. Vázquez’s specialties include Mexican political culture in the 19th century and the history of Freemasonry. Her fellowship is co-sponsored by the California Masonic Foundation.