



# SSHGS

## PERSPECTIVES

The Newsletter of the Salameno School of Humanities and Global Studies

# Rigoberta Menchú: Infinity Made Finite

by Natalia Santamaría Laorden, Associate Professor of Spanish

I am not sure how to articulate transcendence. Days after listening to Rigoberta Menchu in the auditorium, I still felt the impact of her words resonating soundly within me: all-powerful, yet with direct ramifications in everyday life. Back in 1999, an article in a Spanish newspaper on how historian David Stoll had denounced Menchu's *testimonio* for not being accurate caught my attention. I was struck, from the start, by how a scholar could apply an evidently Western definition of "self" to a *testimonio* described in collective terms. And there my affair with Rigoberta Menchu's words started. My master's thesis was entitled something like "(re)citing the ambiguities of an identity formation: The struggles of the Maya Quiché and the violation of their rights by the Guatemalan government and her need to trespass boundaries and learn Spanish in order to defend her community." By the end of the study, it was clear to me that Menchu's identity was still undefined by traditional standards. And yet I was totally unprepared for what I experienced in her visit to Ramapo.

(continues on page 8)



Rigoberta Menchu lectures while SSHGS faculty member Iraida López translates. Photo: Lindsay Davis

**THE SALAMENO SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND GLOBAL STUDIES**  
**SSHGS PERSPECTIVES** **FALL 2015**

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## Letter from the Dean

by Stephen Rice

**G**reetings from the end of another great semester, our first in the renovated Salameo School of Humanities and Global Studies. In September we returned to an entirely new space on the second floor of the B wing, featuring a lounge and study area that's now at the center of the wing, beautiful new classrooms overlooking the grove, and completely refurbished offices. We also have a great new space as the school's main office, in room B-224. Thanks are due to all the people who worked so hard on the renovations over the summer, and on getting us back in for the start of the semester. Please make sure to stop by when you're on campus.

To help inaugurate our space we held an evening reception for alumni in the new student lounge on Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. More than 50 people attended, with alumni present from each decade of the college's existence, along with many



current students and faculty. It was a great event, which we plan to now hold annually right around Founder's Day. If you are a graduate and did not receive our e-mail invitation, please let me know and I'll make sure you get one next year.

Also concerning alumni, I am happy to report the launch of the Ramapo Alumni Mentoring Program (RAMP), which was initiated with the support of our own Alumni Advisory Board here in SSHGS. Through RAMP, alumni will be able to serve as mentors to our current students, helping out with everything from practicing interviews to networking to locating internship possibilities. For more information, visit the RAMP page on the Cahill Center's website at [www.ramapo.edu/cahill/alumni/ramapo-alumni-mentoring-networking/](http://www.ramapo.edu/cahill/alumni/ramapo-alumni-mentoring-networking/).

Another exciting development since my last letter is the challenge grant awarded



Ben Jealous speaks at Ramapo as part of the Dean's Lecture Series.  
Photo: Carolyn Herring

by the Gayle and Paul Gross Foundation to the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. The grant will match each \$50,000 raised annually by the Center with another \$50,000, for a total of \$250,000 over five years. Under the direction of the Center's Director, Dr. Michael Riff, we are now in the midst of a new fundraising appeal to meet the match and help support the Center's important work. In recognition of this

generous support, the Center has been renamed the Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Finally, I am happy to report that three members of our faculty were granted tenure at the Board of Trustees meeting in December. Congratulations to Dr. Todd Landon Barnes (Assistant Professor of Literature), Dr. John Gronbeck-Tedesco (Assistant Professor of American Studies), and Dr. Stacie Taranto (Assistant Professor of History).

## SSHGS NEWS

Literature professor **Patricia Ard** published an article on Jane Austen's disabled brother George (1766-1838) in the most recent edition of the Jane Austen journal *Persuasions On- Line*. Titled "George Austen's Absence from Family Life: The Shifting Biographical Response," the article examines the decision by Austen's parents to place their disabled second son into private homecare where he was rarely visited, the presence of other disabled people in Jane Austen's life, and the changing treatment of George in Austen biographies.

Examining approximately twenty-five biographies dating from immediately after the death of George's famous sister to the present day, Ard found that some biographers initially ignored George altogether, others significantly downplayed the Austen parents' decision to remove George from family life, while the most recent biographies reflect more sensitively on George's disability, the exact nature of

which is unknown. Ard was assisted in her research by Literature major Jacqueline Thomas, who is thanked in an article note.

Professor **Yvette Kisor's** essay "naked as a nedyll": The Eroticism of Malory's Elaine" appeared in *Sexual Culture in the Literature of Medieval Britain*, ed. Amanda Hopkins, Robert Allen Rouse, and Cory James Rushton, from D.S. Brewer. In addition, her paper "Recent After-Texts of *Much Ado About Nothing*: A Study in Contrasts" has been accepted to the Fiftieth International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in May 2015. Finally, her essay "Using the History of Middle-earth series



Professor Yvette Kisor  
Photo: Carolyn Herring

with Tolkien's Fiction" will appear in *MLA Approaches to Teaching: J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings and Other Works*, ed. Leslie Donovan and due out in early 2015.

**Michael J. Meindl** is presenting two papers at the Midwest Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association (MPCA/ACA) Conference in October. "Breath of Life – Cognitive Perception of Animation, Puppetry, and Robotics" presents a theoretical framework that allows us to analyze the differences in our perception and response to "animated" characters. "Perceiving Puppet Terror" uses this framework to explore puppet characters in horror films. Meindl is also continuing to develop his ongoing documentary project, *Manhattan Marionettes*, which looks at the history and current state of puppetry in and around New York City ([www.ManhattanMarionettes.com](http://www.ManhattanMarionettes.com)).

**British Studies:** The Salameo Center for British Studies sponsored a talk from Prof. **Dean Chen** on “The Ghost of 1842: China’s Insecurity and Occupy Central in Hong Kong” on Wednesday 19 November.



Dean Chen delivers his talk “The Ghost of 1842: China’s Insecurity and Occupy Central in Hong Kong” on November 19th. Photo: Todd Landon Barnes

On November 6, Prof. **Todd Barnes** presented his paper “Striking Our Debt to Moral Tragedy: the Economics of Revenge in *Julius Caesar*” at the “Modern Money: Aesthetics After the Gold Standard” conference, which was hosted by the Department of the History of Art at UC Berkeley. He presented the essay again, on November 12<sup>th</sup>, on our campus as part of the Salameo School of Humanities and Global Studies’ Colloquium Series. The essay will eventually be published as part of the Arden Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar: A Critical Reader*.

**Jonathan Callahan’s** first book of fiction *The Consummation of Dirk* was named an Indiefab Foreword Reviews Book of the Year Finalist in the Short Story category. The collection won Starcherone Books’ 8th Prize for Innovative Fiction and was included in Garth Risk Hallberg’s Year in Reading column at the Millions. Callahan also recently wrapped up a nonfiction collection, tentatively called *Devoutly to Be Wished: A Few Thoughts in Closing*, the title piece of which has been cited by both the Paris Review and NYTimes in discussions of Norwegian novelist Karl Ove Knausgaard’s six-volume memoir/novel *My Struggle*.



Professor Alan Baxter’s play *Juan and Emmett* ran Off-Broadway in November. Image: Ivy Theatre  
In November, **Alan Baxter’s** play *Juan and Emmett* ran at the 4th Street Theatre as part of the Ivy Theatre Company’s Trellis Project.

**Neriko Doerr** and research assistant Richard Suarez co-organized the session *Constructing the Closet, Contesting the “Truth”* at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Washington DC in December, 2014.

Doerr’s article “Double Subject Positions” and *Reproduction of Difference: Paradox of Learning about a “Different Culture” and Pedagogy of the Privileged* will appear in *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, & Cultural Studies*, 37(5).

**Iraida H. López** served as commenter on “Cultural Battles and Political Hegemony in the 1960s,” one of five panels presented at a two-day symposium, “New Histories of the Cuban Revolution,” held at Yale University from October 3-4, 2014.

**Philosophy:** The Philosophy Club held three meetings this fall. The meetings were held the first Tuesday of the month from 1-2 in A103. The topics included “Poverty: Whom should we help?”; “Sex and Love: Are we entitled to what we want?”; “Ferguson, MO: Could Mahwah be next?” The Philosophy Club will be meeting in the spring semester, as well. Everyone is welcome to join us to eat lunch and discuss big ideas!

In February 2015, Les Edition will publish a translation of **Hugh Sheehy’s** short story collection *The Invisibles*.

**Political Science:** At the Model United Nations Conference in Washington DC, from Oct 31, 2014 to Nov 2, 2014, Ramapo College student delegates representing the Democratic Republic of Congo were awarded for Honorable Mention Delegations.



Ramapo students with Congressman Garrett. (L-R): Brian McAteer, Michael Pacheco, Jessica Perez, Courtney Lichtenberger, Chris Dernbach, Alex Schwab, Congressman Garrett. Photo: Jeremy Teigen

**Political Science:** The College Republican club hosted US Congressman Scott Garrett (R NJ-5) for a talk and question-and-answer session on October 28, 2014, a week before his November reelection to his seventh term.



Professor Lisa Williams reads at BookCourt in Brooklyn in December. Photo: Lisa Williams

On December 5, **Lisa Williams** gave a poetry reading, along with the poet, Lisa Jarnot, at BookCourt, in Brooklyn. The reading celebrated the publication of her two poetry chapbooks, *Sky Studies* (published by Finishing Line Press) and *The Eighth Phrase* (Porkbelly Press).

Organized by the **Veteran Student Organization** and introduced by President Peter Mercer, there was a panel discussion about reintegrating returning veterans into college on Veterans Day (November 11, 2014).



(L-R): New Jersey Assemblyman Robert Auth, RCNJ Board of Trustee member Gary Montroy (Vietnam veteran, US Army), President of Mahwah Marine Moms Terry Wendrychowicz, Professor Jeremy Teigen (Cold War veteran, USAF), and RCNJ student Richard Sensbach (OIF veteran, USAF). Photo: Alexandra Simone

# Complicated Relationship Between Pope Pius XI and Mussolini Exposed

by Michael Riff



Michael Riff, Director of The Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies  
Photo: Carolyn Herring

On April 23, noted anthropologist and historian David Kertzer examined the complicated, often secret, relations between the dictator of Fascist Italy, Benito Mussolini and Pope Pius XI. Co-sponsored by the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies Italian Club, Professor Kertzer's talk was based on his new book, *The Pope and Mussolini*, published in January by Random House. The Morton and Clara Richmond

Endowment supported the program. Professor Erick Castellanos, who wrote his Ph. D. dissertation under David Kertzer, introduced his mentor.

Using an unmatched wealth of newly available archival materials from the Vatican, Professor Kertzer will tell the dramatic story of the alliance between a weakened Vatican and an ambitious Mussolini who looked to the Church for legitimacy. It shows how the Pope's blessing played a key role in legitimizing fascist rule in Italy. For its part, a weakened and paranoid Church received much needed support in its struggle against Communism and modernity.

Relying heavily on the archives of the Vatican itself, Kertzer painted a highly nuanced picture of the Papacy of Pius XI that would have happily turned back the clock to before the dawn of modernity. While it was far from being pleased about the increasingly closeness between Mussolini and Hitler, it was only in the last days of his life that he came close to speaking out on the matter. Having the Fascist state's help in confronting Bolshevism, secularization and mostly imagined incursions of Protestantism took precedence over speaking out not only against the increasing influence of Nazism that Pius XI viewed as an almost pagan-like cult, but also against Mussolini's imperialist and brutal incursions in Africa. With respect to Germany's treatment of Jews, as Kertzer pointed out during Q&A, while finding Nazi racism antithetical to

traditional Church teaching, the Vatican under Pius XI was not averse to curtailing Jewish participation in society because it saw Jews as agents of modernity and socialism who were undeserving of equality because of their historic refusal to accept Christianity.

David Kertzer joined Brown University in 1992 as the Paul Dupee, Jr., University Professor of Social Science. A Professor of Anthropology and Italian Studies, he was appointed Provost in 2006, serving in that role until 2011. A Brown alumnus (A.B., 1969), Kertzer received a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Brandeis University in 1974. He was William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor at Bowdoin College from 1989 to 1992.

His book *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1997, which will soon be made into a film by Stephen Spielberg. His 2001 book, *The Popes Against the Jews*, has been published in nine languages. In 2005 he was elected as a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



David Kertzer addresses a crowd at Ramapo in April 2014.  
Photo: Ramapo College

## Colloquium Series Delivers

by Stacie Taranto



Professor Paul Elovitz delivers his talk "How Humans Have Become More Civilized and Less Violent." Photo: Niza Fabre

In the fall of 2014, the SSHGS Colloquium Series experienced record turnout at its four events that highlighted the excellent research and writing that our faculty are engaged in when not teaching in the classroom. Paul Elovitz, Associate Professor of History, presented a talk entitled "How Humans Have Become More Civilized and Less Violent" in September. Tae Kwak, Associate Professor of History, gave a talk in October called "Nation-Building and Korean Participation in the Vietnam War." In early November, Lisa Williams,



Professor Todd Barnes, in November, giving a talk on "The Economics of Revenge in Julius Caesar." Photo: Niza Fabre

Professor of Literature, read selections from her new poetry chapbook at an event co-sponsored by the Readings at Ramapo Series. Later that month, Todd Barnes, Assistant Professor of Literature, gave a paper entitled "Striking Our Debt to Moral Tragedy: The Economics of Revenge in 'Julius Caesar.'" The Colloquium Series will continue in the spring of 2015 with four more events that will also

showcase the work of some of our top students and local area scholars. Stay tuned for details!



Professor Tae Kwak lectures for Colloquium Series in October. Photo: Niza Fabre



## Ramapo Students Get Into Dodge

by James Hoch

The Literature program and Literature Club organized a trip to the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival for the 2014 event in Newark. A busload of poetry lovers left for the biannual festival, the largest in the North America, and all safely returned. Reports by students and professors alike were ecstatic. "I'd go again!" offered one rider. "Yeah, it was kinda cool," offered another. Given the veneer of detached cool that poetry students often sport, these responses were high praise. Professor Hoch remarked, "It's amazing that we provide this opportunity for a cost-free trip to a fairly expensive festival. If it wasn't for Yvette Kisor, none of this would've happened." Already students are anticipating the 2016 event. Major thanks to CSI for facilitating the transportation and ticketing.

# FALL READINGS AT RAMAPO: Baxter, Redel, Rekdal, Williams, Various Students

by Hugh Sheehy

Another semester of celebrating writing on campus is in the books. The past few months have seen visits to campus from such literary luminaries as Charles Baxter, Victoria Redel, and Paisley Rekdal, a reading by Ramapo's own Lisa Williams, and a trio of student



Yancarlo Rivera reads from his short fiction in the Padovano Peace Pavilion. Photo: Hugh Sheehy

performances. It began back in September, when students David Grom, Yancarlo Rivera, and Carly Rizzo read from their work in the

Padovano Peace Pavilion. This event featured fiction, poetry, and nonfiction and drew a standing room-only crowd of students and faculty. Rivera's playfully dark short fiction and Grom's thoughtful poetry balanced nicely against Rizzo's humorous essay about embarrassing moments from her childhood. The esteemed writer and teacher Charles Baxter appeared in October for a day events, beginning with a lecture on craft in the Peace Pavilion and ending with a late afternoon reading in the Berrie Center's Sharp Theater. Baxter, the author of fifteen books of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry (one of which was a finalist for the National Book Award), came to us from the University of Minnesota, where he is a professor of Creative Writing, delivering a highly compressed set of exhortations for young fiction writers and later reading a series of excerpts from different works. In early November, RCNJ faculty member Lisa Williams



In October, the celebrated author Charles Baxter gave a lecture on fiction writing and then read in the Berrie Center's Sharp Theater. Photo: Carolyn Herring

read from her two new poetry chapbooks, *The Eighth Phrase* (Porkbelly Press) and *Sky Studies* (Finishing Line), to an overflow turnout in the Peace Pavilion. Williams had previously published a lyric memoir and a book of criticism on Toni Morrison and Virginia Woolf. She teaches courses in Creative Writing, Literature, and Critical Reading and Writing.

Just before the Thanksgiving break, the writers Victoria Redel and Paisley Rekdal arrived in drizzly Mahwah to give an hour of conversation and a joint reading.

While Rekdal was held up by travel complications in Atlanta, Redel (the author of seven books of fiction and poetry) engaged in a richly informative, funny, and poignant dialogue with Professor James Hoch during the common hour in the York Room. Fortunately, our delayed reader was able to make it for her evening event in the Trustees Pavilion. There, Ms. Rekdal, a poet and an essayist who has six books to her name, joined Redel in an energetic reading to a large gathering of students, faculty, and staff.

**Paisley Rekdal & Victoria Redel**  
Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup>  
1 pm: Q&A in the York Room  
6 pm: reading in the Trustees Pavilion

Paisley Rekdal has written four books of poetry: *A Cup of Brimstone*, *Six Girls Without Plants*, *The Invention of the Antebellum*, and *Armed Eye*. She has also written a book of essays entitled *The Night my Mother Met Bruce Lee* and a memoir entitled *Intimate*. Her work has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Amy Lowell Poetry Traveling Fellowship, and a George Voice Writers on the Verge Award grant.

Victoria Redel is the author of three books of poetry: *Wanted: Woman Without Umbrella*, *Sweat*, and *Already the World*, and four books of fiction including *Make Me Do Things*, and *The Butler of Truth*. She has been awarded the 2011 S. Mankato Gibbs Novel Award and the 2012 Forward Short Story Fiction Prize among others. Her novel *Loveless* was adapted for a feature film directed by Kevin Bacon.

December 10<sup>th</sup>, in even that was both light-hearted and tinged with the regret of seeing a whole course of study come to a close, students from my Creative Writing Capstone course read from manuscripts representing years of their dedication to making literary art.



Author Victoria Redel reads from her fiction in the Trustees Pavilion. Photo: Thomas Mannion

The chilly winds of December showed up for the semester's final pair of readings. On December 5<sup>th</sup>, Kenny Moncayo (fiction and nonfiction), Marina Bisha (poetry), and Danielle Corcione (screenplay writing) shared some of their work with yet another big and enthusiastic crowd. And on the evening of

### Student Reading

Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1pm  
Spiritual Center

Ask your professors if this can count for CECI

Yancarlo Rivera, Carly Rizzo, and David Grom will be reading.

To request disability-related accommodations, please call at least 48 hours in advance: 201-684-7400

### SALAMENO SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & GLOBAL STUDIES FALL 2014 COLLOQUIUM SERIES

You are invited to hear our distinguished faculty present excerpts from their research and writing. A question-and-answer session will follow each presentation. Ask if this can count for CECI.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 10-11AM, A-221  
"HOW HUMANS HAVE BECOME MORE CIVILIZED AND LESS VIOLENT"  
Paul Elovitz, Associate Professor of History

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1-2PM, SPIRITUAL CENTER  
READING FROM PROFESSOR WILLIAMS' NEW POETRY CHAPBOOK  
Lisa Williams, Professor of Literature  
Co-Sponsored Event: Readings at Ramapo Series

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29\*, 10-11AM, A-221  
"NATION-BUILDING AND KOREAN PARTICIPATION IN THE VIETNAM WAR"  
Tae Kwak, Associate Professor of History  
\*ADJUSTED DATE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 10-11AM, A-221  
"STRIKING OUR DEBT TO MORAL TRAGEDY: THE ECONOMICS OF REVENGE IN 'JULIUS CAESAR'"  
Todd Barnes, Assistant Professor of Literature

To request disability-related accommodations, please call at least 48 hours in advance: 201-684-7400

Sponsored by the History Club



## EVERYDAY AND FAMILY LIFE IN THE SOVIET UNION

Wednesday, October 8  
2-3pm, A-221

**Dr. Zhenya Pomerantsev**  
Russian Language Coordinator and Lecturer,  
Modern Languages & Literatures Department,  
Fordham University

**CEC Opportunity!**  
Ask your professor if this event can  
count toward your CEC hours!

To request disability-related accommodations, please call at least 48 hours in advance. 201-884-7406



Soviet Union poster. Image: Jess Minzner

## History Club Welcomes Pomerantsev

by Stacie Taranto

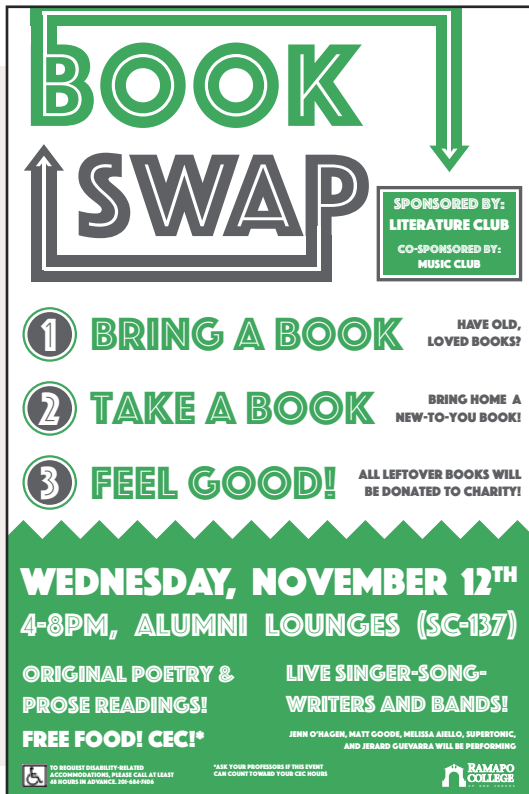
The History Club continued to maintain its active presence on campus in the fall of 2014. In October, the club invited Dr. Zhenya Pomerantsev, the director of Fordham University's Russian program, to give a well-attended talk entitled "Everyday and Family Life in the Soviet Union." Drawing on his personal experience of growing up in the USSR, as well as on his recent research,

Dr. Pomerantsev discussed what life was like for average Soviets, including the type of anti-American propaganda they received from government, media, and popular culture sources. In November, the History Club hosted its annual advisement and recruitment event for current and potential history majors and minors. The club plans to continue its momentum in the spring of 2015, with a former speechwriter for President Ronald Reagan scheduled to give a talk in February. In March, the History Club will host a professor from The New School in New York City; she will discuss the popularization of yoga in America over the past fifty years, with special emphasis on women and gender in an event co-sponsored with The Women's Center as part of women's history month (Herstory). Stay tuned for more information. History Club events are free and open to all members of the Ramapo community.



Dr. Pomerantsev discussed what life was like for average Soviets, including the type of anti-American propaganda they received from government, media, and popular culture sources.

Photo: Zhenya Pomerantsev



# BOOK SWAP

**SPONSORED BY:  
LITERATURE CLUB**  
**CO-SPONSORED BY:  
MUSIC CLUB**

- 1 **BRING A BOOK** HAVE OLD, LOVED BOOKS?
- 2 **TAKE A BOOK** BRING HOME A NEW-TO-YOU BOOK!
- 3 **FEEL GOOD!** ALL LEFTOVER BOOKS WILL BE DONATED TO CHARITY!

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>**  
**4-8PM, ALUMNI LOUNGES (SC-137)**

**ORIGINAL POETRY & PROSE READINGS!**      **LIVE SINGER-SONG-WRITERS AND BANDS!**

**FREE FOOD! CEC!\***

JENN O'HAGEN, MATT GOODE, MELISSA AISLEO, SUPERTONIC, AND JERARDO GUEVARRA WILL BE PERFORMING

\*ASK YOUR PROFESSORS IF THIS EVENT CAN COUNT TOWARD YOUR CEC HOUR




Image: Jess Minzner

## Literature Students Trade Up at First Annual Book Swap

by Corbin Hirschhorn

On Wednesday, November 12th, the Literature Club sponsored a book swap for Ramapo students in the Alumni Lounges. Books were first collected from students and professors. Students who then brought books to the event were able to exchange them for any previously donated books on display. This event also featured student poetry readings and musical performances by members of the Music Club. The leftover books, totaling in the hundreds, are being donated to Paterson public schools with help from Ramapo Readers. The Literature Club intends to establish the book swap as a regular campus event for the benefit of students of Ramapo College and nearby schools.

# Rigoberta Menchú: Infinity Made Finite

(continues from cover)

She started with oxygen. Bringing it back to the Quiche belief in its importance and yet, making us all aware of the need for it in the room we were sharing. The resonance of her words kept on extending beyond our specific time-and-space frame (Mayans think that you need to be connected to seven previous generations to live fully), but her message could not have been more connected to the now (she told students if somebody asks who could volunteer to help clean a land, the answer should always be “me”). She acknowledged the amount of pressure and loneliness that some young people feel on a regular basis. Yet, like in the legal fight to have her father’s assassination brought to the Guatemalan court, the answer should never be victimizing. Having too many objectives was aimless. Living with two clear aims of what it is you want to accomplish was her advice.

As I listened, her discourse unfolded in all its complexity, including from a philological point of view. If I had first been drawn by her handling of Spanish, it was very clear to me that she had a very good command of

the language into which she was being expertly translated by Professor Iraidia Lopez. If any of the Spanish terms she wanted to emphasize was not prevalent in the translation, she would repeat it so that it could reach her audience fully. She displayed the same control during the questions and answers period: she interweaved her response to several questions in a discourse that, again, made the abstract concrete.

Her emphasis on assisting and supporting those in need was prevalent throughout her talk. For example, she cited how some of her acquaintances did not understand why she would give scholarships to “a bunch of kids”. Her answer was clear: one of them could, one day, become Nobel Prize for Peace. By then, I was entirely fascinated: she did not say, as I recall, “like I did”. She did not need to. That sort of cosmic, transcendental understanding of the self she shared challenged all boundaries.

At the end of her lecture, I had a chance to thank her, not only for living her life like she did, but also for sharing it. My master’s thesis on her *testimonio* was the written assignment I submitted to my application to the doctoral program. Not only was I awarded financial assistance for it, but I felt I was a professor at Ramapo today because of her. I had one more waiting: She thanked me.

## Rigoberta Menchú

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2014  
1-2 pm, H-wing Auditorium

Nobel Peace Prize Winner

"Student Engagement: Towards a Promising Future"



Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, Rigoberta Menchú is an activist of the Maya K'iche' ethnic group in Guatemala. She has dedicated her life to denouncing oppression and defending the rights of indigenous peoples. Her testimonial book, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*, won the prestigious Casa de las Américas award in 1983 and has been translated into a dozen languages. The book, which she narrated to anthropologist Elizabeth Burgos, describes in rich detail her story as well as the story of her people. She has been the recipient of more than thirty honorary degrees from universities around the world, and has been named "Ambassador of Goodwill" by UNESCO.

Co-sponsored by the School of Social Sciences and Human Services (SSHS), the Salameno School of Humanities and Global Studies (SSHGS), and the American Democracy Project.

 To request disability-related accommodations, please call at least 48 hours in advance. 201-684-7406

