



Thursday, April 23rd

12:00pm @ the LAII

¡Presents!

FRG Recipients:
Sarah Leister and Corey Ragsdale

Join SOLAS at the LAII for the final ¡SOLAS Presents! Lecture Series event of the year

“We Know Where We Stand’: Contesting and Constructing Knowledge in Nicaragua’s Chronic Kidney Disease Epidemic”

Sarah is a M.A. candidate in the Latin American Studies program at UNM.

Chronic kidney disease of non-traditional causes (CKDnt) is affecting sugarcane workers in northwestern Nicaragua at extremely high rates. In the last 10 years, it is estimated that 46% of male deaths in the city of Chichigalpa were caused by CKDnt. A variety of global and local actors have converged upon this public health crisis in search of biomedical causes of the disease and methods to prevent devastatingly high rates of premature death. At the same time, ex-sugar cane workers face extreme poverty and illness as many mobilize in protest against harsh labor practices in the local sugarcane company and a lack of governmental support for workers. Based on two months of field research at La Isla Foundation, Sarah will present her findings on the politics of knowledge production surrounding this crisis. She will look at how CKD has mobilized local and international actors around workers’ rights and how knowledge production has individualized and interiorized disease, thereby eclipsing structural violence.



Photograph courtesy of Sarah Leister

“Biological Consequences of Cultural Interaction in Postclassic Mexico”

Corey received his M.S. in Biological Anthropology and is a PhD candidate in the Department of Anthropology at UNM.

Economic, political, and cultural relationships connected virtually every population throughout Mexico during the Postclassic period (AD 900-1520). Much of what is known about population interaction in prehistoric Mexico is based on archaeological or ethnohistoric data. What is unclear, especially for the Postclassic period, is how these data correlate with biological population structure. Corey addresses this by assessing biological distances among 28 samples based upon a comparison of dental morphology trait frequencies, which serve as a proxy for genetic variation, from 810 individuals. These distances were compared

with models representing geographic and cultural relationships among the same groups. Results show that shared migration and trade are correlated with biological distances, but geographic distance is not. Trade and political interaction are also correlated with biological distances in Central Mexico, but not in West Mexico. These results indicate that trade and politics likely played a major role in shaping patterns of interaction between populations, and that the socioeconomic differences between Central and West Mexico allowed for different venues of population interaction. This study also shows that the biological distance data support the migration histories described in ethnohistoric sources.



Photograph courtesy of Corey Ragsdale