

Western Michigan Community Connections
(CRP Teaching Circle, Fall 2013)

Ways to Engage Students to think about Immigration and the Latino Experience in Western Michigan

(1) Community-Based Learning and Volunteer Opportunities

One-time opportunities:

- a. September 23: Latino Civil Rights Tour (Grand Rapids and Chicago), www.gvsu.edu/kutsche
- b. September 23-October 18: Portrait of a Community Archive (free and open to the public, Cook Library Center, 1100 Grandville Ave. SW)
- c. October 11 and 12: Great Lakes History Conference (Pew Campus), “Collisions and Encounters: Migrations in a Global Perspective” – See www.gvsu.edu/history
- d. October 14-15: Sonia Manzano Book Signing and Public Events
- e. Hispanic Heritage Month Events – See: www.gvsu.edu/oma
- f. April 18 (Holland): Local History Roundtable (theme this year will be focused on immigration and civil rights), www.gvsu.edu/kutsche

Longer opportunities:

- a. Youth Leadership Initiative Internships (contact kutsche@gvsu.edu for more information)
- b. Researchers and volunteers always needed to assist with processing oral histories and archival materials documenting history of Latino Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest (contact kutsche@gvsu.edu for more information)
- c. Additional resources: Service Learning Center (www.gvsu.edu/service)

(2) Research Opportunities

GVSU Special Collections and Archives houses two of the largest collections of materials documenting the history of Latinos in the Midwest and the struggle for civil right/equal treatment in Western Michigan. These initiatives are rich resources for student and faculty researchers who wish to use these materials for papers and/or to create multimedia teaching/learning materials. Students and faculty can also get involved as researchers or research assistants on both of these projects. They include:

“The Young Lords in Lincoln Park Project” www.gvsu.edu/younglords

“Speaking Out: Western Michigan’s Civil Rights Histories” www.gvsu.edu/speaking

Starting Winter 2014, the Kutsche Office of Local History will also be recruiting student researchers to assist with a migrant families project in Hart-Shelby. Interested individuals should write to: kutsche@gvsu.edu

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(3) Additional Questions/Considerations

*Often immigration is stereotyped as a “problem.” But Michigan is one of more than a dozen states that actively recruit immigrants to a) solve the problem of falling population and b) benefit the local economy. For more on Michigan’s recent immigrant recruitment efforts, see: http://www.michigan.gov/snyder/0,4668,7-277-57577_57657-306532--00.html and <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/michigan-immigrant-entrepreneurs-innovation-and-welcoming-initiatives>

*Connecting immigration past and present through talking about community: What makes a community a good place to live? What makes it interesting? Encouraging students to think about connections between the past experience of immigrants and more recent arrivals is important. Some good readings on Western Michigan immigration include:

**A New Home in Michigan: The Mexican American Experience in Muskegon* (2009), by Connie Navarro and Dan Yakes, in GVSU Libraries or by emailing kutsche@gvsu.edu

**Stealing Buddha’s Dinner: A Memoir* (Penguin Books, 2007), by Bich Minh Nguyen (a memoir of a young Vietnamese woman growing up in Grand Rapids and Fruitport in the 1980s)

**Field Guide to Ethnic Groups in Michigan*, by Christian G. Carron and Veronica L. Kandl (GR Historical Commission, 2008); accompanies Grand Rapids Public Museum’s permanent exhibit, “Newcomers”

**Flight to Freedom: The Story of the Vietnamese of West Michigan*, by Gordon Olson (GR Historical Commission, 2004)

**Dutch Immigrant Women in the United States, 1880-1920* (2002), by Suzanne Sinke