

## **2019 NEH SUMMER INSTITUTE: “JOSÉ MARTÍ AND THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES OF FLORIDA IN CUBAN INDEPENDENCE AND THE DAWN OF THE AMERICAN CENTURY”**

### **PROGRAM OF STUDY**

The Institute’s 4-week program of study will be organized according to the three principal elements that make up this extraordinary history. First, participants will come to know the history of the immigrant communities of Ybor City and Key West during the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their origins, settlement, rapid growth, and the novel forms of civil society they created, blending old world traditions with the new economic and social realities of their adopted nation. All aspects of these communities will be explored, including political activism, labor strife, social organization, and cultural production. Secondly, the Institute will focus on two key aspects of the life and work of José Martí: his role in establishing the Cuban Revolutionary Party among the cigar workers of Tampa and Key West, and his place among the great U.S. chroniclers of the Gilded Age. Special emphasis will be placed on the enormous influence these immigrant communities had on Martí’s formulation of a national identity –*Patria*–, and on his unique and revealing analysis of U.S. government and society. Thirdly, the Institute will examine the rationale for the U.S. intervention in the struggle for Cuban independence and analyze the far-reaching consequences that the Spanish-American War has had on the global distribution of power, consequences that to this day reverberate through politics, history, culture and economics. During the final week, participants will have ample time to develop their teaching modules and/or research projects while engaging in a series of workshops and discussion panels designed to weave these stories together into an integrated and multidisciplinary portrait.

### **Week One: The Immigrant World Of Ybor City And Key West, 1860-1900**

During Week One, Institute participants will receive a hands-on introduction to the unique immigrant community that took shape on the west coast of Florida in the late nineteenth century, when, for reasons both geopolitical and economic, thousands of Cubans, Sicilians and Spaniards converged in Key West initially, and then in Ybor City, West Tampa, Ocala and beyond as part of the booming cigar industry of that time. The dynamic and complex social fabric that was formed from this multicultural encounter in a forgotten corner of the deep South would come not only to form an important base for the revolutionary movement that would lead to Cuban Independence, but also to establish the cultural identity of Tampa itself, a city that retains to this day the physical spaces and ethnic identifications first established by its immigrant founders.

The week will begin with an inaugural lecture on “The Immigrant Worlds of Ybor City, 1886-1900” by **Rodney Kite-Powell**, Touchton Map Library Director & Saunders Foundation Curator of History at the Tampa Bay History Center. Mr. Kite-Powell will trace the history of the arrival of the first Cuban and Spanish immigrants, and the founding of the cigar industry with the construction of Don Vicente Martínez Ybor’s factory in what would come to be known as Ybor City. In the afternoon, after a brief yet thorough orientation to the Institute, Co-Director **James López** will lead participants on a walking tour of Ybor City, in which participants will have the opportunity to visit a number of key historic landmarks associated with this history, including the many

mutual aid societies established by these immigrants. Later in the week, participants will be treated to a guided tour of the Ybor City State Museum, where they will have the opportunity to study many of the artifacts that defined the daily labor of these communities, including preserved homes, cigar-making stations and any number of publications, photographs and memorials. The busy first day will conclude with a welcome reception and the opportunity to get to know one another a little better.

The rich cultural tapestry of these communities will be made evident on Tuesday and Wednesday by **Dr. Kenya Dworkin** and **Dr. Susan Greenbaum**. Dworkin is currently completing a book, *Before Latino: How Cuban Theater in Tampa Shaped an American Immigrant Society*, which will form the basis for her presentation in which she will trace the cultural development of Ybor City through the lens of its autochthonous theater, and analyze major issues in it such as ideology, race, gender, inter-ethnic relations, and identity. Another important aspect of the immigrant community of Ybor City is the fact that it was formed and thrived in the midst of the Jim Crow South, however, despite their location, the cigar factories of Ybor City were integrated, and Afro-Cubans of both sexes worked alongside their Spanish, Cuban and Italian counterparts. Greenbaum, author of *More than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa, Florida*, will discuss the role of the Afro-Cuban community in Ybor City over three generations, beginning with the role of free blacks in the struggle for Cuban independence during the 10-Years War, their central place in José Martí's vision of a free Cuba, and the consequences of Jim Crow on their lifestyle and economic prospects in their adopted country after Martí's death.

Week One will conclude with lectures by **Dr. Gerald Poyo** and **Dr. Lisandro Pérez**. Dr. Poyo, in addition to being a distinguished historian of the period, is also the great-grandson of one of Martí's closest collaborators and leader of the Key West chapter of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, José Dolores Poyo. He will discuss the economic, political, social and institutional factors that led to the establishment and development of Key West's revolutionary community over a period of thirty years. Dr. Pérez, whose book *Sugar, Cigars and Revolution: The Making of Cuban New York* has recently been published by NYU Press, will discuss the important collaborative relationship between the Cuban communities in New York, where José Martí lived and worked for 15 years, and those in Florida in the establishment of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and the Cuba's War of Independence.

Week One will also include a guided visit to the University of South Florida's Special Collections, including its Ybor City and West Tampa Collections, which include a vast number of original documents and artifacts that chronicle the activities and operations of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and the political activities of the various patriotic clubs founded by the cigar workers. Participants interested in spending time researching the archives will be afforded the opportunity to do so throughout the duration of the Institute. These activities will be augmented with discussion groups and participant advising.

## **Week Two: José Martí at the Intersection of Empires**

Week Two will be devoted to the life and work of José Martí, his life-long struggle to overthrow the Spanish Empire in the Americas, and to understand the incipient U.S. aspirations to replace it. Dr. James López will provide the initial overview of Martí's life and work on Monday. That evening will be reserved for a special presentation by the Honorable **Emiliano J. Salcines**, retired federal judge of the District Court of Appeals and highly-respected local historian, responsible for meticulously documenting all the known visits by José Martí to Ybor City and Key West. This presentation is an incredibly informative and entertaining trip through time, and includes a great number of historical artifacts and photographs, bringing to life the propitious encounter between Martí and the cigar workers, or *tabaqueros*, of Tampa. On Tuesday, a presentation by Martí historian and journalist **Gabriel Cartaya** will explain the nature of the political collaboration between Martí and the Cuban immigrant communities of Ybor City, which would lead to the founding of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and the War of Cuban independence. A comprehensive understanding of the evolution of Martí's worldview as an immigrant living in the United States, and as a political leader concerned with the establishment of a free republic dedicated to social justice and racial equality, will be addressed in two lectures by the renowned Martí scholar and translator **Dr. Anne Fountain** which will discuss how American writers, particularly Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, exerted a significant influence on the Cuban writer, reinforcing his deep humanitarian and democratic instincts, and which will highlight how U.S. race relations influenced Martí's plans for racial harmony in Cuba. Dr. Fountain's perspective will be complemented by **Dr. Esther Allen** who will discuss Martí's role as a chronicler of American life during this period in U.S. history.

Week Two will include a screening of the 2010 Cuban film *El ojo del canario* ('The Eye of the Canary'), the first feature-length biopic of José Martí, followed by a panel discussion, as well as organized discussion groups on specific readings by Martí. Finally, on Wednesday morning, participants will receive a guided tour of the permanent exhibit "Cigar City" at the Tampa Bay History Center, which contains a rich collection of artifacts and documents related to this period in local history. Participants will be granted unlimited access to the Tampa Bay History Center throughout the duration of the Institute.

## **Week Three: The Spanish-Cuban-American War: Cuban Independence and U.S. Intervention**

The goal of Week Three is to understand the reasons for the U.S. intervention in the struggle for Cuban Independence in the Spanish-American War, and the far-reaching consequences this would have for both the U.S. and Cuba during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. **Dr. Michael Conniff** will provide a detailed overview of the origins and effects of the U.S. intervention in Cuba which will address the war of 1898 in the larger context of the nineteenth century, paying particular attention to the forms in which the history of Cuba and the United States converged in a fateful climax, thereupon setting in motion much of the history that was to follow in the twentieth century. As Dr. Conniff asserts, a Cuban war to end one empire served as the basis of the emergence of another. Dr. Conniff's presentation will be complemented by **Dr. John Tone**, who will address

how José Martí's brave yet unrealistic vision for an independent Cuba did not survive the realities of the war he helped unleash to achieve that independence. According to Dr. Tone, the Cuban War of Independence (1895-1898) failed to resolve regional, racial, economic, and political divisions among Cubans. This lecture will examine how this came to pass as a result of the nature of warfare in Cuba and the effects of U.S. intervention. Formal presentations will conclude with a lecture by **Dr. Denis Rey**, who will discuss the geopolitical consequences of the Spanish-American War.

The history of the U.S. intervention in Cuba is closely tied to the physical space in which this Institute will take place. Tampa served as the principal port of embarkation for U.S. forces heading to Cuba, including the Rough Riders, led by Theodore Roosevelt, who, thanks to the war, would become a national hero and iconic U.S. president. The commanding officers were housed in the ornate Tampa Bay Hotel, now Plant Hall, the main administrative center of the University of Tampa and the most recognized structure in Tampa. Participants will receive a guided tour of the **Henry B. Plant Museum**, located on the south wing of Plant Hall, a National Historic Landmark, which recreates the hotel as it originally was and includes a special exhibit on the significance of the building during the early stages of the Spanish-American War. Participants will also be granted unrestricted access to the museum during the duration of the Institute to explore at their leisure. These activities will be augmented with discussion groups and participant advising.

#### **Week Four: Consequences of Intervention**

The goal of the fourth and final week of the Institute is to allow participants to develop their teaching modules or research projects, while also exploring –in an open, interactive way– some of the long-term consequences of this history as it relates to their particular disciplinary interests. The week will begin with a panel moderated by Drs. López and Rey titled “Martí and the *Patria*: The Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics”. The utilization of Martí as the supreme patriotic emblem, and the appropriation of his writings on *Patria*, are a fascinating prism through which to see the evolution of U.S.-Cuba relations until this day. We will discuss, debate and demonstrate examples of the use of Martí as a symbol or cypher throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in politics, academia, literature, art and cinema. Cuban films related to this theme will be screened nightly (attendance optional) to further explore this topic in an informal and entertaining way.

On Tuesday, the Institute's final presentation will provide an overview of the legacy of the immigrant workers of Ybor City after the end of the Spanish-American War and into the first decades of the 20th century. In “Ybor City Goes to War: The Evolution and Transformation of a ‘Latin’ Community in Florida, 1886-1950,” Dr. Gary Mormino, Frank E. Duckwall professor emeritus in Florida history at University of South Florida-St. Petersburg and co-author of *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors* (U of Illinois P, 1987) will discuss the evolution of this community in the decades after the end of the Spanish-American War as they both adapted and resisted cultural assimilation in the United States, and how many of their unique characteristics and cultural practices remained intact and evolved throughout the 20<sup>th</sup>

century. That evening, an presentation by local historian Maura Barrios will give the participants an intimate look at the neighborhood they've lived in during the Institute, a place where the legacy of those cigar communities continues to thrive in Tampa's large Latino community.

Finally, the co-directors and available faculty will be on hand Wednesday to facilitate individuals and groups on the development of their teaching modules and/or research projects. Transportation to the USF library, Ybor City or other places of scholarly interest will be provided. Thursday and Friday will be reserved for participant presentations, feedback and discussion. Participants will present their own ideas about how to most effectively teach this material to their students, or pursue research in this field, thereby helping to preserve this historical and cultural legacy, which represents such an important contribution to the teaching of U.S. history.