

NEWS RELEASE

Soto-Crespo Receives Honorable Mention for Major MLA Prize

'Brazenly original' book disputes conventional thinking about political status of Puerto Rico

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BUFFALO, N.Y. -- Ricardo Ortiz of Georgetown University calls Ramón Soto-Crespo's work "some of the best ...being done now in U.S. Latino literary criticism."

The Modern Language Association agrees.

In January, it will award Soto-Crespo, PhD, of Buffalo, associate professor of American studies and director of Latina/Latino Studies at the University at Buffalo, one of its major distinctions: an honorable mention for the MLA's Eighth Annual Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies.

This prize, which has only one winner and one honorable mention, is one of 17 MLA awards to be presented Jan. 7 at the association's annual convention in Los Angeles. It is given for an outstanding scholarly study of Latina or Latino or Chicana or Chicano literature or culture. The winner is Chrystal Parikh, PhD, associate professor of English and social and cultural analysis at New York University.

Soto-Crespo received the honorable mention for his book, "Mainland Passage: The Cultural Anomaly of Puerto Rico" (University of Minnesota Press), which the award committee called "exceptionally, brazenly original in its argument that Puerto Rican writers and painters from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consistently articulated a framework of non-incorporation for the island.

"Soto-Crespo," the award citation read, "weaves together the best of postcolonial, Latin American, and Latino studies cultural theory to illustrate how the debate between nationhood or U.S. statehood obfuscates the chilling critique offered by the political reality of the status quo.

"Soto-Crespo demonstrates how popular Puerto Rican imagination not only embraces its borderland status but offers a critique of and an alternative to nationalism as an imaginary default for discourses of political power, cultural belonging and modernization. (He) delivers a nuanced yet bold reframing of the Puerto Rican body politic as a cultural anomaly within American, Latin American, and United States ethnic studies that offers sustained critiques of masculinist and authoritarian nationalisms."

Soto-Crespo's essays have appeared in the journals *American Literary History*, *Modern Language Notes*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Contemporary Literature*, and *Textual Practice*. His areas of interest include Latina/o and Caribbean literature, Continental philosophy, psychoanalysis and queer studies.

His current book project, "Primitive Futures: The Biopolitics of Sexual Practices in Latin/o American Writing," analyzes the cultural links between population health management and sex in the Americas.



UB's Ramon Soto-Crespo will be recognized by the Modern Languages Association for his U.S. Latino literary criticism.

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Members of the selection committee were the award-winning cultural analyst Alicia Arrizón of the University of California, Riverside; Chon Noriega, professor of critical studies in the UCLA School of Theater, film and Television and the author or editor of ten books on Latino media, performance and visual art, and María Josefina Saldaña, PhD, associate professor of social and cultural analysis in the NYU College of Arts and Sciences.

The University at Buffalo is a premier research-intensive public university, a flagship institution in the State University of New York system and its largest and most comprehensive campus. UB's more than 28,000 students pursue their academic interests through more than 300 undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs. Founded in 1846, the University at Buffalo is a member of the Association of American Universities.