



Announcing Recipients of the Annual William M. LeoGrande Award and Prize

American University's School of Public Affairs and Center for Latin American and Latino Studies are pleased to announce the winners of the William M. LeoGrande Award, for the best scholarly book or article on Latin American or Latino Studies published by a member of the American University community, and the William M. LeoGrande Prize, for the best book on U.S.-Latin American relations, for 2020-2021.

Juliana Martínez, Associate Professor in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, is the recipient of the William M. LeoGrande Award for her extraordinary book, "Haunting Without Ghosts: Spectral Realism in Colombian Film, Literature and Art" (University of Texas Press, 2020). A rich and penetrating exploration of artistic engagements with Colombia's history of violence, and a moving consideration of the ethics of cultural representation, this book breaks new ground with its development of "spectral realism." It deftly demonstrates the ethical value of this concept for efforts to recover voices which have been violently erased from the long history of protracted conflict in Colombia and to demand justice for Colombia's dead and disappeared.

Vanessa Walker, currently the Gordon Levin Associate Professor of History at Amherst College, is this year's winner of the William M. LeoGrande Prize. Deeply researched and well-written, her book, "Principles in Power: Latin America and the Politics of U.S. Human Rights Diplomacy" (Cornell University Press, 2020), illuminates the relationship between policy-makers and non-governmental advocates in the U.S. and in Latin America to help explain the emergence of an anti-interventionist human rights approach critical of U.S. power during the Cold War. It also makes a distinctive contribution to our understanding of the evolution of human rights advocacy by identifying a key shift in the orientation of U.S. human rights policy and advocacy from an emphasis on the way the United States contributes to human rights violations and supports human rights violators in Latin America in the 1970s to an orientation that focuses on violations within countries, especially on the Left. Prof. Walker's approach to this set of issues, addressing U.S. policy and diplomacy alongside the work of activist networks, resulted in a nuanced and fluent account that sheds new light on the role of human rights in U.S. policy toward Latin America, while raising larger issues about what constitutes a moral foreign policy.

The William M. LeoGrande Award was established in 2012 to honor Bill LeoGrande's tenure as Dean of American University's School of Public Affairs from 2003 to 2012. The endowed award was made possible through the financial support of alumni, friends, and colleagues of Professor LeoGrande. One of the world's most accomplished scholars in Latin American politics and U.S. foreign policy, Professor LeoGrande continues to serve as a professor of government at American University.