

Karen A. Spira

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EDUCATION

- 2013 Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley
Comparative Literature (Spanish, English, and German literatures)
- 2000 California Clear Teaching Credential
Los Angeles Unified School District Intern Program
- 1998 A.B., Brown University
Double major: Hispanic Studies and Comparative Literature, *magna cum laude*

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- 2025-present Assistant Director
Center for the Advancement of Teaching, Wake Forest University
- 2020-2025 Associate Professor of Spanish (tenured)
Department of Modern Language Studies, Guilford College
- 2013-2020 Assistant Professor of Spanish
Department of Modern Language Studies, Guilford College
- 1998-2004 Bilingual (Spanish) Elementary Public School Teacher
Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, (2002-2004)
Nevin Avenue Elementary School (1998-2001)

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

- 2025-present Assistant Director, Center for the Advancement of Teaching, Wake Forest University
- Support individual instructors through consultations, observations, and student feedback collection
 - Create and facilitate programming on perennial and timely topics in teaching in higher education
 - Contribute to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through informal and formal means (blog posts, conference presentations, invited presentations)

2021-2025 Coordinator, Spanish Program, Guilford College

- Led the largest modern language program at Guilford College, serving approximately 175 students per semester
- Supervised Spanish instructors, conducting formal teaching observations
- Provided instructional support to instructors for the implementation of state-of-the-art frameworks for learning such as Inclusive Pedagogy
- Interviewed, hired, and onboarded new faculty on an annual basis, with an emphasis on inclusive hiring practices
- Designed and implemented curricula to support the success of a diverse student body, 52% of whom were students of color and approximately 50% of whom were Pell Grant eligible
- Led assessment of general education learning outcomes and Spanish learning outcomes through designing assessments, collecting data, and compiling reports
- Led the successful implementation of an expanded modern language general education requirement, including collaboration with academic and student-affairs units to ensure student success
- Designed and updated Canvas shells and online learning platforms for all Spanish 101 and Spanish 102 sections

2021-2025 Chair, Department of Modern Language Studies, Guilford College

- Managed personnel and operating budget for a complex department housing three modern languages and four different academic programs
- Set departmental priorities and oversee long-term projects, including the recent revision of the Senior Capstone Project to better align with student learning outcomes
- Hired, trained, and supervised undergraduate departmental assistant
- Collaborated with the Accessibility Resource Center and Information Technology Services to create a streamlined, proctored language-placement testing system

2021-2024 Faculty Mentor, Guilford College

- Served as appointed Faculty Mentor to faculty from departments ranging from Criminal Justice to Public Health, providing coaching in all aspects of academic work, including course design, instructional delivery, and advising
- Connected faculty with resources that support them in achieving their instructional goals, ranging from on-campus opportunities to professional literature

2018, 2025 Leader, Faculty Learning Communities

Inclusive Teaching in Polarized Times

- Led biweekly discussions of *Inclusive Teaching: Strategies for Promoting Equity in the College Classroom* (Kelly A. Hogan & Viji Sathy, 2022)
- Supported colleagues in implementing inclusive teaching strategies in their classrooms

Small Teaching

- Created and led a Faculty Learning Community to implement strategies from *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning* (James Lang, 2016)
- Facilitated ongoing reflection on strategy implementation, including cycles of peer observation and debriefing

2023, 2025 Co-leader, Mexican Childhoods Short-Term Study Abroad Program, Guilford College

- Co-conceived, co-designed, and co-instructed faculty-led short-term study abroad program, *Mexican Childhoods*, with faculty collaborator, Dr. Rachel G. Riskind (Psychology)
- Created innovative interdisciplinary, experiential course teaching students about diverse experiences of childhood in Mexico through community-engaged learning in the city of Oaxaca de Juárez
- Collaborated with youth-focused community organizations on the ground in Oaxaca to develop meaningful community-engagement opportunities for Guilford College students
- Serve as primary interpreter and cultural liaison prior to, during, and following travel to Oaxaca
- Collaborated with Advancement and other campus partners to remove financial barriers to study abroad, resulting in the recruitment of a socioeconomically diverse group of students

2018-2020 Chair, Awards Committee

- Improved systems and communication to facilitate the smooth operation of Guilford College's campus-wide Spring Awards ceremony
- Collaborated with the Provost's Office and Financial Aid to streamline the distribution of departmental financial awards to selected students
- Partnered with colleagues from academic and student affairs units to plan Spring Awards events

2018-2020 Member, Faculty Development Committee

- Coordinated faculty Lunchtime Conversations to support campuswide teaching initiatives
- Organized Faculty Book Groups, selecting important works from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and planning discussion sessions

SELECTED TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2013-2025 Spanish Instructor, Guilford College

- Design Spanish courses at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced level using high-impact pedagogical strategies
- Deliver courses using Inclusive Pedagogy and active-learning strategies to maximize student engagement and success

2016, 2017 First Year Seminar Instructor, Guilford College
& 2022

- Developed original syllabi based on a topic of my choice (Histories and Stories of Race; Finding Place: In College, in Greensboro, and Beyond)
- Designed learning activities, assignments, and assessments aligned with First Year Seminar learning objectives

COURSES TAUGHT

Lower-Division Spanish Courses

Communicating in Spanish I
Communicating in Spanish II
Intermediate Conversation and Composition
Speak Up in Spanish: Oral Communication through the Arts

Upper-Division Spanish Courses

Latinx Cultures in the United States
Indigeneity and Representation
Resistance and Revolution in Latin America
Modernity
Contemporary Latin America
Novels and Their Narrators (transnational focus)
Voices from the Margins

Community-Engaged Teaching embedded in Spanish classes

<i>Project</i>	<i>Community Partner</i>	<i>Years</i>
Bilingual Book Club	Hemphill Branch Public Library	2019-2020
FaithAction ID Drive	FaithAction International House	2015, 2018, 2019, 2020
Adult Literacy	Reading Connections	2017
College Information Nights	Oakwood Community Center	2016-2017
Stranger-to-Neighbor	Oakwood Community Center & FaithAction International House	2014, 2016

Media Coverage of Community-Engaged Teaching

Molina, Camila. "How do you build trust between a community and its immigrants? Nonprofit uses four steps to turn strangers into neighbors." *Faith and Leadership*, Leadership Education at Duke University, 18 Feb. 2020, <https://faithandleadership.com/how-do-you-build-trust-between-community-and-its-immigrants-nonprofit-uses-four-steps-turn-strangers>. Accessed 18 Feb. 2021.

Courses taught in English

Mexican Childhoods (interdisciplinary, team-taught course, includes study abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico)
Places & Stories (First-Year Seminar)
Histories and Stories of Race (First-Year Seminar)
Finding Place: In College, in Greensboro, and Beyond (First-Year Seminar)
Social Fact, Social Fiction (First-Year Reading & Composition)
Word and World (First-Year Reading & Composition)
Workshop: College Writing (Summer Bridge Program)

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND HONORS

Spring 2025	Awardee, Excellence Brought to Light, Guilford College
Spring 2024	Awardee, Excellence Brought to Light, Guilford College
2022-2023	Faculty Fellow, Center for Principled Problem Solving, Guilford College

Fall 2022	Awardee, Excellence Brought to Light, Guilford College
Spring 2022	Awardee, Excellence Brought to Light, Guilford College
2021	Awardee, Sabbatical
2019	Awardee, Bruce B. Stewart Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Non-Tenured Faculty Member, Guilford College
2018-2019	Faculty Fellow, Center for Principled Problem Solving, Guilford College
2018	Awardee, Dick Dyer Award for Academic Advising, Guilford College
2016-2018	Grantee, Center for Principled Problem Solving Faculty Project Grant, Guilford College
2013	Dissertation Fellowship, Berkeley Center for the Study of Value, University of California, Berkeley
2010	Comparative Literature Departmental Block Grant, University of California, Berkeley
2009-2010	Dean's Normative Time Fellowship, University of California, Berkeley
2009	Awardee, Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award, University of California, Berkeley
2007-2008	Grantee, Course Improvement Grant, University of California, Berkeley
2007	Center for Latin American Studies Travel Grant, University of California, Berkeley
2007	Predissertation Summer Research Fellowship, University of California, Berkeley
2005	Summer Language Study Grant, University of California, Berkeley
2004-2006	University Fellowship, University of California, Berkeley

PUBLICATIONS

2023	"The Woven Text: Andean Cloth as Template and Motif in <i>La sangre de la aurora</i> ," <i>Revista de Estudios de Género y Sexualidades/Journal of Gender & Sexuality Studies</i> , vol. 49, no. 1-2, 2023
2021	"Los maestros no humanos de <i>Los ríos profundos</i> ." <i>Arguedas Global: Indigenismo en el nuevo milenio</i> , edited by José Antonio Mazzotti, Universidad César Vallejo, Asociación Internacional de Peruanistas y Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana
2014	"Toward an Aesthetics of the Abject: Reimagining the Sensory Body in Arguedas's <i>Los ríos profundos</i> ." <i>Revista Hispánica Moderna</i> , vol. 67, no. 1, 2014, pp. 73-89.

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Conference Presentations

*SoTL

2023*	"Affordable and transformative study abroad as principled social justice intervention," co-authored with Dr. Rachel Riskind, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Denver, June 25-27
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- 2023 “Domestic Employees and the Peruvian Novel: From Abjection to Resistance,” Thinking Andean Studies Conference, Haverford College, March 24-26
- 2022 “Las migrantes internas: La representación de trabajadoras domésticas en la ficción de Karina Pacheco Medrano” as part of the roundtable “Polarización y migración en la literatura peruana contemporánea,” Latin American Studies Association, virtual conference, May 5-8
- 2021 “Urban Domestic Contact Zones in Contemporary Peruvian Fiction,” Latin American Studies Association, virtual conference, May 26-29
- 2020 “The Woven Text: Claudia Salazar Jiménez’s New Form for the Novel of Peru’s Internal Conflict,” Andean Research Proseminar, virtual conference, July 17-18
- 2019 “Los maestros no humanos de *Los ríos profundos*,” Simposio Internacional “Indigenismo global: 50 años de la muerte de José María Arguedas,” Havana, Cuba, November 28-29
- 2019 “*Nuestras voces tejiendo*: A New Form for the Novel of the Sendero Luminoso,” Thinking Andean Studies Conference, Evanston, IL April 12-13
- 2018* “Against Service, for Friendship,” Latin American Studies Association, Barcelona, Spain, May 23-26
- 2018 “#MeToo in Perú: Sexual Violence in Claudia Salazar Jiménez’s *La sangre de la aurora*,” Philological Association of the Carolinas, Charleston, SC, February 23-25
- 2017* “Small Yet Big: Community-Engaged Learning at all Scales,” co-presented with Dr. Jennie Knight, Philological Association of the Carolinas, Charlotte, NC, April 7-8
- 2017 “The Narrative Prehistory of 72migrantes.com,” Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies, Chapel Hill, NC, March 23-26
- 2016 “Resisting Being Minor: The Micro-Portrait in Juan Rulfo’s *Pedro Páramo*,” Latin American Studies Association, New York, NY, May 27-30
- 2016 “Narrative Activism and the Textual Grassroots in Mid-Century Latin American Fiction,” American Comparative Literature Association, Cambridge, MA, March 17-20
- 2015 “The Narratee, The Reader, and the Problem of Judgment in Juan Rulfo’s ‘¡Diles que no me maten!’,” Philological Association of the Carolinas, Wilmington, NC, March 6-7
- 2014 “Intertextuality as Missable Nuance: Readings and Misreadings of Gabriel García Márquez,” Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts, St. Petersburg, FL, October 10-12

- 2013 “Space of Narration, Space of Culture: Position and Power in Modern Peruvian Literature,” Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts, Greensboro, NC, October 18-19
- 2012 “Arguedas’s Intranational Diasporic Poetics: Bodies Across Cultures,” American Comparative Literature Association Conference, Providence, RI, March 29-April 1
- 2011 “Lessons from Comala? Literariness and Resistance in *Pedro Páramo*,” American Comparative Literature Association Conference, Vancouver, BC, March 31-April 1
- 2009 “The Novel as Cross-Cultural Genre: Arguedas’s *Yavar Fiesta*,” Crisscrossing Conference, New York, NY, April 9-11
- 2007 “Troubling Truths: María de Regla’s Testimony in *Cecilia Valdés*,” Latin American Studies Association Conference, Montreal, Canada, September 5-8

Campus Talks on Research

- 2018 “#MeToo in Perú: How a Novel Speaks to a Movement,” Herstory Month Celebration, Guilford College, March 15
- 2016 (invited talk) “Indigenous Identity and the Politics of Sensory Experience in Arguedas’s *Los ríos profundos*,” Imagining Modernity from the Margins: A Colloquium on Latin America, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, March 24
- 2014 “Dirt, Sweat, and Rot: The Politics of Sensory Experience in José María Arguedas’s Novel *Los ríos profundos*,” Faculty Research Presentation Series, Guilford College, November 19
- 2011 “The Politics of Description in José María Arguedas’s *Los ríos profundos*: Minor Moments, Major Stakes,” Comparative Literature Dissertation Colloquium University of California, Berkeley

Additional Presentations

For Community Audiences

- 2025 Presenter, Self-Awareness, Social Emotional Learning Symposium, Guilford College, May 21
- 2024 Co-presenter, Healthy Excellence: (Re)Calibrating Our Professional and Personal Compasses in A Turbulent Time, Guilford College, Aug. 28
- 2023 Panelist, Promoting Student Classroom Engagement, Guilford College, Nov. 29
- 2022 Organizer & Panelist, You Don’t Have Time to Come to this Roundtable: How to Supervise Work-Study Students to Make Time for What Matters Most, Guilford College, Nov. 29

2022	Presenter, A Chair's Perspective on the Current Academic Environment, Guilford College, Sept. 12
2021	Presenter, Faculty Presentations on Educational Development Grant-Supported Efforts, Guilford College
2020	Panelist, Preparing Future Faculty, Guilford College, Nov. 30 (also 2014, 2015, 2016, 2019)
2019	Panelist, Community Book Clubs, Center for Principled Problem Solving Board of Advisers Meeting, Guilford College, March 29
2018	The First Day of Span 101 (Mock Class), Guilford College, Feb. 19
2016	Panelist, Community-Engaged Learning in Spanish, Center for Principled Problem Solving Board of Advisers Meeting, Guilford College, April 22
2014	Panelist, Parents' Informational Lunch, "Soy un líder" Conference, Guilford College, Nov. 22

For Student Audiences

2017	Panelist, Critical Thinking and Fact Checking, Teach-In: How Might Trump's Agenda Affect You and Your Communities?, Guilford College, Feb. 15
2016	Panelist, Advice for Thesis Writing, Junior Honors Seminar (also 2014, 2015), Guilford College
2015	Speaker, Community-Engaged Learning at Oakwood Forest, Opening Community Meeting, Guilford College, Guilford College, Aug. 18
2014	Panelist, Documenting Immigration: Latino/a Migration and Transnational Youth, International Studies Program & Sociology and Anthropology Department, Guilford College, Sept. 24

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Ad Hoc Reviewer

Latin American Research Review

Transmodernity

Hispanic Review

Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos

Departmental & College Service ~ Guilford College

2023-	Member, Curriculum Committee
2023-2024	Associate Leader, GuilfordReads Faculty Learning Community
2022-2023	Chair, Honors Thesis Committee, Spanish & English double major
2022	Organizer, Sylvia Trelles Lecture
2020	Co-Chair, Faculty Development Committee
2019	Member, Quality Enhance Plan (QEP) Working Group
2019-2020	Member, Awards Day Committee, Spring
2018-2019	Chair, Honors Thesis committee, Health Sciences & Spanish double major
2018	Faculty Development Leader, <i>Small Teaching</i> online learning community
2018	Member, Search Committee for Guilford Guides (Advisers)
2017-2018	Member, Awards Committee
2017	Member, Search Committee, Center for Principled Problem Solving

2015-2020 Co-Director, Spanish Program
2014-2017 Member, Faculty Development Committee
2016-2017 Coordinator, Faculty Book Groups
2016 Coordinator, Lunchtime Conversations during weekly Faculty Lunch
2014-2015 Coordinator, Faculty Research Presentation series
2014-2015 Member, Presidential Transition Committee

Departmental & University Service ~ University of California, Berkeley

2012 Member, Planning Committee, “Mexico and the Rule of Law” Conference
2009 Chair, Teaching Committee
2009 Co-organizer, Outlook: New Directions in Comparative Literature lecture series
2008-2009 Member, Teaching Committee
2007-2008 Member, Library Committee
2005-2007 Chair and Member, Space Committee
2005 Funding Chair, Agency in/and/via Literature conference

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

2025 Social Emotional Learning Symposium
2024 Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (earned Badge)
2023 Creating Wicked Students: Course Redesign Institute, Guilford College
2021 Project Narrative Summer Institute: Narrative & Social Justice, The Ohio State University
2020 Resilient Teaching Institute, Guilford College
2017 Faculty Mentorship of Undergraduate Research, Guilford College
2016 Becoming Trustworthy Anti-Racist White Educators, Guilford College and Allies for Change)
2014 Faculty Development Seminar on Community-Engaged Learning, Guilford College
2014 Writing in the Majors, Guilford College
2009 Designing Courses to Enhance Student Motivation, University of California, Berkeley
2007 Teaching Spanish in College, University of California, Berkeley

LANGUAGES

English (native)
Spanish (near native)
German (intermediate)