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## **FREE LATINO AMERICANS: 500 YEARS OF HISTORY FILM SCREENING IN CASA GRANDE**

Explore Latino history and culture Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the historic Paramount Theater

**Phoenix, AZ** – The public is invited to attend a free film screening of the National Endowment for the Humanities-supported PBS documentary film *Latino Americans: 500 Years of History*. The film screening and Q&A with scholar Dr. Vera Lopez from Arizona State University takes place Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the historic Paramount Theater (420 N. Florence St. #4 Casa Grande, 85122). The award-winning series chronicles the history of Latinos in the United States from the 16th century to present day. The program is free and open to all.

The episode to be shown, *The New Latinos (1946-1965)*, explores the large scale immigration from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic that shaped a new generation of Latinos. The program is made possible in partnership with the Latino Familia Initiative, a network dedicated to engaging Pinal County families in community action impacting Latino issues.

In 2015, Arizona Humanities was selected to receive a competitive *Latino Americans: 500 Years of History* grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the American Library Association (ALA) offering film screenings and public programs in diverse communities across Arizona.

For more information, visit [www.azhumanities.org](http://www.azhumanities.org). For questions about *Latino Americans: 500 Years of History*, contact Ellie Hutchison, Programs Manager at [ehutchison@azhumanities.org](mailto:ehutchison@azhumanities.org) or 602-257-0335 x26.

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**About the episode *The New Latinos (1946-1965)*:** Until World War II, Latino immigration to the United States was overwhelmingly Mexican-American. Now three new waves bring large-scale immigration from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. As the Puerto Rican government implements a historic overhaul over a million Puerto Ricans are encouraged to leave for the US mainland, to alleviate the economic pressure. A young Juanita Sanabria arrives in New York, works hard in the garment district, but encounters hostility and discrimination. Ethnic tensions explode in youth gang warfare depicted in films like *West Side Story*, etching the stereotype of the knife wielding Puerto Rican in the American consciousness.

In the film, Rita Moreno plays the role of Anita and wins an Oscar. But for most Puerto Ricans empowerment remains elusive. A young Puerto Rican lawyer, Herman Badillo, takes on the political establishment, opening the door for unprecedented Puerto Rican participation in electoral politics. In the early 60s, the first Cubans flee the left-wing Castro regime, a relatively white, middle-class flight that soon forms a refugee enclave in Miami. A child of 11 at the time, Gustavo Perez Firmat believes like most refugees, that it is only a matter of weeks before the American government will wrest Cuba from the Communist regime. But Castro survives. Maria de los Angeles Torres is only six years old when she leaves Havana without her parents, one of 14,000 children are smuggled out through an underground network. Unable to leave legally, Manuel Capo and his two military age sons – make a dramatic journey to the US. With skills honed in the family furniture business in Cuba and support from the federal government, the Capos build thriving business marketing to the growing Cuban population.

In 1965, fearing another Communist takeover in the Caribbean, President Johnson sends Marines to the Dominican Republic, triggering a third wave of immigration. With a US visa in hand, 20 year-old university student, Eligio Peña, flees to New York. Eventually he brings his family to New York as Dominicans build a new home in Washington Heights. Julia Alvarez would take the immigrant experience – her own and that of her fellow

Dominicans – to unprecedented literary heights in *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*. In her work, she explores the hybrid identity taking shape in a new generation of Latinos, who are now demanding their place in America.

View more about the series at [www.pbs.org/latino-americans/en](http://www.pbs.org/latino-americans/en).

**About Dr. Vera Lopez:** Dr. Vera Lopez is an Associate Professor in the School of Justice and Social Inquiry. She received an MA in Program Evaluation and a PhD in School Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin. She also completed a one-year child clinical research internship at the University of Illinois at Chicago, a two-year NIMH funded research post-doc at Arizona State University's Prevention Research Center, and a clinical internship at the Arizona Department of Juvenile Correction's Black Canyon Correctional School for girls. In 2009, Lopez was selected from a national competition to be a Visiting Scholar at the University of Houston's Center for Mexican American Studies where she spent the 2009-2010 academic year conducting research on Mexican American girls' relationship power, trust, and infidelity.

Dr. Lopez has extensive research and clinical experience working in juvenile justice, residential treatment, and school settings. Her research areas include delinquency, sexuality, substance abuse, and prevention research with a major focus on adolescent girls and Latino/a youth. As an interdisciplinary researcher, Lopez is well versed in both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Most of Dr. Lopez's work focuses on system-involved girls' relationships with romantic/sexual partners and parents. Recent publications examine adolescent girls' relationships with drug-using parents, girls' meth acquisition strategies within the context of their relationships with boys/men, and girls' relationships with emotionally distant fathers. Her work has been featured in a number of well-regarded journals, including the *Journal of Family Issues*, *Violence Against Women*, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *Feminist Criminology*, *Family Relations*, *Journal of Drug Issues*, and *Criminal Justice & Behavior*. She and her colleagues from the School of Social Transformation also have a forthcoming edited volume, *Adolescent Girls' Sexualities and the Media*.

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#### **Arizona Humanities**

<http://www.azhumanities.org>

*Mission: Arizona Humanities builds a just and civil society by creating opportunities to explore our shared human experiences through discussion, learning and reflection.*

Arizona Humanities is a statewide 501(c)3 non-profit organization and the Arizona affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Since 1973, Arizona Humanities has supported public programs that promote understanding of the human experience with cultural, educational, and non-profit organizations across Arizona.