

New ethnic studies director brings perspective

Dennis Galvan wants to incorporate international concepts and points of view into the University program

By Chelsea Duncan
News Reporter

The Ethnic Studies Program has a new director who plans to bring a fresh perspective to the department.

Dennis Galvan, an associate professor in the International Studies Program and the Political Science Department, officially began his duties at the beginning of fall term.

Galvan said he's not exactly sure how he ended up in his position.

"All of sudden, there was a hole that needed to be filled," Galvan said.

Galvan replaced English professor Shari Huhndorf, whose term as director came to a close in July. He said he may not have been the first choice for the job. But with two established professors in the program leaving the department — including Matt Garcia, who was hired on at Brown University — Galvan said the University sought out "a friend of the program."

Although the Ethnic Studies Program focuses primarily on the construction and context of ethnicity in the United States, Galvan said he hopes to expand it by incorporating international concepts and also connect his international research of different cultures with that of other researchers already in the program.

Galvan's involvement with international studies started when research for an undergraduate thesis project gave him his first taste of different cultures. He chose to center his travels and research in West Africa after deciding against Latin American because he felt it would have been like "cheating" because his father is from Argentina.

"I was always kind of curious about the world outside the U.S. and different cultures," he said.

Galvan said he thinks his past research in West Africa and Indonesia, as well as his current research in Senegal, will integrate well into the program because it is important to compare other countries with large

ethnic populations to the ethnic groups in the United States.

"A lot of times, ethnic studies has mostly focused on the experiences of ethnic groups in the U.S., but as globalization changes the world, groups aren't isolated anymore," he said. "We need to think of ethnic groups in the U.S. in a global context."

Ethnic Studies Program office coordinator Donella-Elizabeth Alston said she has enjoyed working with Galvan, and she expects to see a few changes in the program this year.

"I think maybe he sees connections a little bit differently," she said. "I think there might be more integration with international studies, perhaps."

Assistant visiting professor Fiona Ngó said even though Galvan stepped in at the last minute as director, he has kept the program vital on campus.

"Dennis is a really wonderful administrator," she said. "He really knows what he wants to do with the program."

Along with integrating international perspectives into the program, Galvan has other goals, including increasing the number of majors in the program and the number of non-majors who take ethnic studies classes. He said he also hopes to expand the number of ethnic studies courses and continue to bring in speakers and faculty.

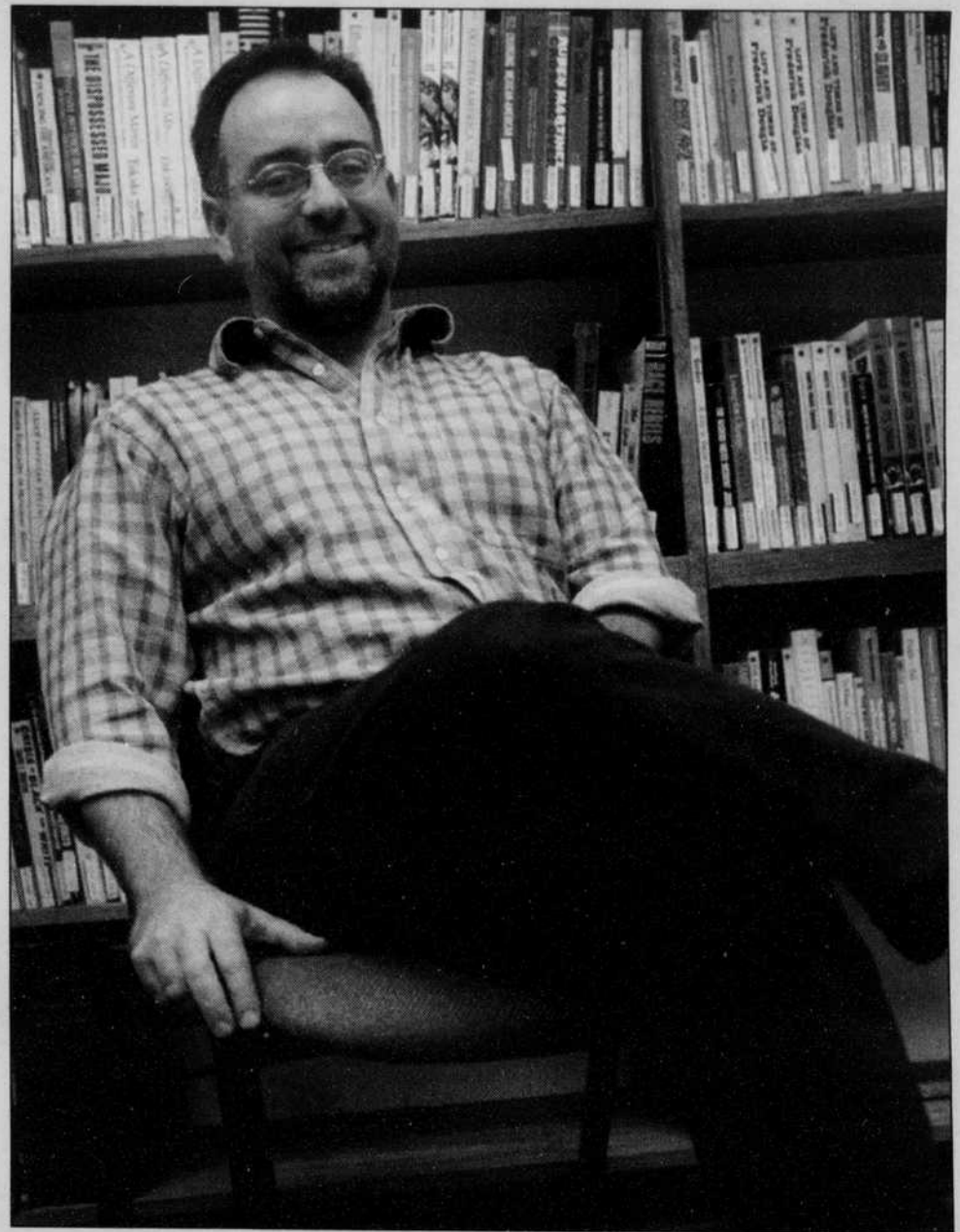
Galvan said he also intends to continue working on the main goal of the program, which is to fight against discrimination and injustices based on skin color.

"One of the goals of the Ethnic Studies Program is to use knowledge and understanding to break down stereotypes," he said.

In the mean time, Galvan said he manages to balance the classes he teaches in both of his original departments with his new responsibilities as director.

"I wear different hats a lot, and I juggle them," he said.

Contact the higher education/
student life/student affairs reporter
at chelseaduncan@dailymerald.com.



Danielle Hickey Senior Photographer

Dennis Galvan, the new Ethnic Studies Program director, took over the position at the beginning of the term.

Domestic violence workshop aims to dispel abuse myths

Event organizers say they will provide useful tools for people interested in helping to stop abuse

By Lisa Catto
Freelance Reporter

Womenspace and the ASUO Women's Center are presenting a free workshop for domestic violence survivors and their supporters this weekend. The workshop is part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Friends and Family Training will be this Saturday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Sacred Heart Medical Center auditorium.

Womenspace Community Outreach Director Margo Schaefer will conduct the workshop, which is designed to present useful tools for individuals who want to help people dealing with domestic violence.

"It's really important for people to get the skills to talk to people that have experienced domestic violence," Schaefer said.

She added that knowing the right way to talk to someone about domestic violence is very important.

Workshop attendees will also learn mistaken beliefs about domestic violence, warning signs of violence and how victims may feel. Schaefer said she also plans to stress the importance of creating a safety plan in case vio-

lence occurs in a relationship.

Schaefer said the majority of the attendees at the conference in the past have been men, adding that the FBI reports 50,000 cases of battered men every year.

Erin Dury, sexual violence prevention and education coordinator for the Women's Center, is also involved in the event.

She said this workshop is good for preliminary stages of learning more about domestic violence, especially learning what to say and what not to say to victims.

"You should never ask 'why' when someone is telling you about their domestic violence experience," Dury said. "Make sure you are supporting

their situation."

Schaefer agreed.

"People who are battered already have someone controlling their life, they don't need you controlling their life," she said.

Schaefer said she feels the most important thing survivors should know is that they are not to blame and they just got unlucky.

At least one woman in four will experience some sort of domestic violence in her lifetime, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children & Families domestic violence fact sheet. Of those incidents, women age 15-35 suffer the highest rates of violence from husbands, ex-

husbands or boyfriends, according to the fact sheet.

Schaefer encourages survivors and supporters to contact Womenspace for help or any information. Womenspace honors complete confidentiality and anonymity. Users do not need to leave a name or they can create a pseudonym.

Registration for this weekend's workshop is not required but is recommended. To register or for more information or help call Womenspace at 485-8232 or their 24-hour hotline at 485-6513.

Lisa Catto is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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