DEAR ER&M 2020,

WE LOVED TEACHING YOU

IN OUR CLASSES:
EMILY ALMENDAREZ

“Emily is a spirited scholar, whose ethical imagination is matched by her interpretive power. She combines fellowship, social engagement, and radiance in all her work. She bridges academic discovery with commitment to struggle beautifully – she is always in motion.”

Professor Alicia Schmidt Camacho
“Dear Grace, you wrote in December of 2019 that your project was a way of ‘returning and (re)discovering home’ as the beginning of your development as a woman of color feminist. In this way, you walked in the traditions set by such writers and editors as Barbara Smith, Cherrie Moraga, and Gloria Anzaldua. You are on your way, as a writer and an editor yourself, to creating a work that will help so many others find their way home as well, and I am very honored to have been apart of that journey.”

Professor Rod Ferguson
ANDREA ASPAJO

“It has been a pleasure to have you in class and, above all, to get to know you as a person. Your generosity and dedication to helping family and friends are an inspiration to all of us. I will treasure our conversations and look forward to staying in touch and become witness to the many wonderful possibilities awaiting you. Felicidades!”

Professor Ana Ramos-Zayas
ALE CANALES

“Dear Ale, look at the archive that you have helped your friends to assemble. One day this project will have wings, and we who observe it now will be merely one part of an expanding group of witnesses. Because of it, the world will no longer presume that the rich history of trans communities only resides in the global north. Thank you for this work and congratulations.”

Professor Rod Ferguson
NADIA BALDERAS

“Having Nadia in class and working with her on the Senior Essay has been a wonderful experience. Nadia's dedication and interest to education and social justice, particularly in Latinx communities in her home state of Texas, has been uplifting. I have no doubt that Nadia is off to make some great transformations in the lives of Latinx families and youth. Congratulations!”

Professor Ana Ramos-Zayas
NATALIA REYES BECERRA

“Natalia is a transformative scholar, one who has enlarged the mission of ER&M by her service to New Haven, migrants, and other communities. She bridges fields that do not often speak to one another and brings new constituents into scholarly conversation. I have prized her generous spirit and her quiet, fearless, engagement!”

Professor Alicia Schmidt Camacho
ANNIE CHENG

“Annie, you are full of positive energy and your can-do approach to life and learning is admirable. It has been a great pleasure to have you in my classes and to advise your senior thesis. Your passion for food justice and history culminates in your rich thesis about the significance of Indochinese cooks in the Parisian social and food-scapes during the colonial era. I can’t wait to hear more about your future adventures! Congratulations!”

Professor Quan Tran
“Dear Mery, the question that you ask in your senior thesis is one that we all need to confront no matter our age or rank--how do we move beyond the narrowness of institutional existence and ‘find a way to exist outside and beyond...[the] harmful and limiting constructs of merit, excellence, and deservingness?’ It is necessary because it is fundamental to the survival of our human dignity and integrity. You have done us a great service by making this question the framework for how we must understand student struggles here at Yale. A thousand ‘thank-you's’ would not be enough.”

Professor Rod Ferguson
“Shamsa made an unpretentious but profound impact in discussions in my own seminar, every week. And outside of the classroom, she left an even greater mark: her work with IRIS, Fair Haven Tutoring, and Edumais – a tutoring organization for kids from favelas in Rio de Janeiro, with whom she worked while studying abroad – gives the best sense of an individual grounded in community values. Shamsa Derrick is truly a leader, and I expect that all of us in ER&M (and PLSC) will be proudly following her career for a long time.”

Professor David Simon
PRISCA DOGNON

“Prisca, behind your quiet presence is a wonderfully creative mind that knows how to harness the power of spoken words and the theatrical. In the form of a play, your thesis cleverly transforms a Chicago braiding shop run by Togolese immigrant women into a dynamic site that grapples with overlapping histories of black migration to the United States. It has been my pleasure to guide you through this project and I am eager to see your work on stage! Congratulations!”

Professor Quan Tran
“Kendall, you are a delightful student. The workshop that you developed for high school students to examine the colonial origins of racial discourse that influence perceptions of hair in African American communities is a wonderful example of how ER&M students are eager to share the knowledge that they have gained beyond the classrooms. As a double-major in ER&M and Political Science, you have so much to offer the world! Congratulations!”

Professor Quan Tran
“I will never forget your senior essay and, above all, the talent and passion for Latinx music which you integrated into it. A PhD in Ethnomusicology in the future? Whatever you decide to do, I am convinced your thoughtfulness, sensibility, and creativity will shine. It has been a pleasure to work with you in your Senior Essay, and I wish you the best in the next stage!”

Professor Ana Ramos-Zayas
YUKI HAYASAKA

“Yuki, you have been a highly dedicated student throughout your time at Yale. It was very rewarding to guide you through both your senior thesis and having you in my classes. Your excellent thesis is a meticulous reflection of your capacious, careful, and critical engagement with the micro dynamics of transnational labor recruitment and migration in the Thailand-Japan context. Congratulations!”

Professor Quan Tran
ALYSSA INCE

“Alyssa's generous and reflective presence in class made all of us better learners, listeners, and students. Your solidly researched and inquisitive senior essay on the history of racial formation in 20th century Panama demonstrated many of the insights and skills you have gained in Political Science and ER&M. Warm congratulations on this special accomplishment.”

Professor Daniel Martinez HoSang
“I count as one of my greatest pleasures having had the opportunity to know and work with Janis – one of those extraordinary people who is never only a student (though her keen intelligence is daunting and she is certainly accomplished in this regard), but she is also a cultural worker, a poet-essayist-artist, a beloved community member, a committed leader, a modest sage, and an enormous inspiration to everyone around her. Janis lifts up all the projects in which she is involved. I can't wait to observe and know Janis in the post-Yale years to come. Congratulations, respect, and hugs, Janis!”

Professor Lisa Lowe
JULIA KAHN

“Julia, a double major in Spanish and ER&M, brought a wide range of talents and commitments to the major. She is a seasoned journalist, a singer, travel writer, and language tutor. I remember Julia's careful contributions to seminar discussions and her polished and insightful essays, which brought out nuanced dimensions of the texts and discussions. Congratulations, Julia!”

Professor Daniel Martinez HoSang
“Dear Supriya, It has been so wonderful having you in class and getting to know you this semester. I know your ambitions for your project were not able to be realized due to the pandemic but I am so proud of the way you channeled your creativity and political acuity into a new, creative project for your senior thesis that preserved the original spirit of the project. You demonstrated imaginative thinking, resilience, artistic skill and quick thinking despite the difficult circumstances and I am so proud of you and all the work you've produced this semester.”

Professor Zareena Grewal
“It has been a great pleasure and privilege to know and work with Kellyn, a thoughtful and fearless thinker, writer, and person [...] Kellyn's thesis takes together ethnographic research, queer theory, and whiteness studies to examine how queer, lesbian, and trans persons navigate the hyper-masculine racialized world of auto-shops [...] Thank you Kellyn for being so inspiring, thoughtful, and generous. Huge congratulations, Kellyn, you inspired me and I am looking forward to what is ahead.”

Professor Leah Mirakhor
“Working with Ben on his senior thesis has been an academic highlight of 2020. It began with me walking him through the basic contours of a field he hardly knew, and it ended with him leading me on an archival tour de force on the history of anti-semitism and interracial relations in the United States. I was inspired by his work ethic and intellectual creativity.”

Professor Elli Stern
RUHI MANEK

“I loved working with Ruhi on this project. It was so intentional: it was about excavating her own identity and lineage, while also asking broader questions about migration, nationhood, citizenship and belonging. Her questions were the most pertinent we can ask, and the final project was a fitting capstone on her inquiry. I’m proud and grateful to have had the chance to advise her. Congratulations, Ruhi!”

Professor Dan Magaziner
JAYE MEJÍA-DUWAN

“Jaye, you are a thoughtful and articulate student. As a double-major in ER&M and Environmental Studies, you have enriched seminar discussions with valuable and nuanced insights. Your keen understanding of intersectional framework in the struggles for social and environmental justice is so important and necessary for now and the future. Congratulations!”

Professor Quan Tran
“It was a pleasure working with Mary on her wonderful senior thesis project on the intimacies of reproductive surrogacy in the U.S. and in transnational contexts. She approached this work with patience, curiosity and determination. Mary was drawn initially to the topic because of her intuition that reproductive surrogacy was an underexamined site of profound inequities of power [...] She produced a precise, refined analysis that not only specifies those racialized and gendered inequalities of power, but that also demonstrates how the sentimental guise of intimacy is used to mask these inequalities. Congratulations and all best wishes, Mary!”

Professor Lisa Lowe
MATTY MOTYLENSKI

“Matty and I share a love of Queens where they live and I was a little kid, a borough of mom-and-pop stores. Just as it takes bricks, mortar, and hard work to create a store, it takes a lot to have a community. It takes the openness to welcome new people; the commitment to maintain relationships; and the willingness to perform identity to create the script of our lives together. Matty is a wonderful student, a great Yalie, and an essential member of the community at the NACC. Congratulations Matty!! See you and your mom at the Bayside Diner.”

Professor Jay Gitlin
Sophie Neely

“Sophie, I truly enjoyed having you in my classes, working with you through the YUNA program, and advising you on your creative senior thesis. You diligently carried out archival research and thoughtfully integrated family stories and historical records to create a captivating play about Filipina identity at the nexus of imperial and diasporic formations. It was exciting to watch you conceptualized and executed this important, powerful, and meaningful project. Congratulations!”

Professor Quan Tran
“Titania, you have faced so many challenges that stood in the way of your undergraduate education. I admire your resilience and hard work in overcoming those obstacles. It has been so meaningful to advise you on your thesis—a powerful, creative, and, at times, heart-wrenching exploration of inter-generational memory of displacement and loss in the form of a graphic novel. Your mom would have been so proud of your accomplishments. Congratulations!”

Professor Quan Tran
“Jessica's thoughtful presence in class--as a writer, interlocuter, and thinker--was always appreciated. For ER&M 300, she created a capstone podcast that examined the development of marimba ensembles in relation to the formation of race in Latin America, drawing on her talents as a performer as well. Congratulations to you!”

Professor Daniel Martinez HoSang
NIKITA RAHEJA

“Nikita is a true interdisciplinary scholar, majoring in ER&M and Economics/Mathematics. She produced a moving podcast for ER&M 300 that used personal memoir, music, and interviews to explore questions of cultural identity, hybridity, and migration. Congratulations to you Nikita!”

Professor Daniel Martinez HoSang
GABRIELLE RIVERA

“I'm glad that we were able to develop a working and mentoring relationship. Navigating these institutions and doing so in our own ways can be challenging, and it's been wonderful seeing you manage the past few years as ably as you have. I've particularly noticed your consistency and active presence in and out of the classroom, and I want to applaud you for finding the choices that have made the most sense for you. I'm looking forward to staying in touch and hearing about the next, exciting developments that await.”

Professor Ned Blackhawk
DIANA SAAVEDRA

“It has been great to have you in class over your years at Yale. I still remember your insightful comments and generosity toward your classmates. Despite some bumps in the road, you have managed to pull through, and I can see how that great tenacity and dedication will serve you well in whatever road you decide to take. Congratulations!”

Professor Ana Ramos-Zayas
SPENCER SHIMEK

“Spencer's wonderful senior essay, on the Center for Worker Justice in Eastern Iowa, drew on his passion for labor rights and social justice and his committed training as a double major in Political Science and ER&M. His relentless commitment to getting the analysis and narrative right and learning from his experiences are a unique gift. Warm congratulations Spencer!”

Professor Daniel Martinez HoSang
“Marisa, from the first pages of your energy journal in our class with Myles last year to the epilogue of your brilliant senior essay, it has been a privilege to work with you and learn from you. Along with the critical skills you have honed so finely these past years, you bring imagination, generosity, and joy to your transformative practice—whether that practice be academic writing, farm labor, or writing about farm labor. All of that work has been exemplary and inspiring to me, and I know it will be for many others in the years to come.”

Professor Doug Rogers
MASLEN WARD

“It has been my sincere pleasure to think with you over the past two years [...] I have been awed by your courageous and forward-thinking intellect and the humility and care you take with all of your work. Your thesis is a testament to the bravery, innovation, and generosity that guides all of your endeavors. You have extended the possibilities for engaging Black Feminist Theory by helping to reclaim it as a revolutionary intervention in disrupting the boundaries of academic disciplines as well as the taken for granted assumptions we make about our world. I am eager to witness your next steps after Yale. Onward!”

Professor Aimee Cox
CHASE WARREN

“It's been a true pleasure working with you over the years and seeing your interests grow in the ways that they have. Your dedication to the community, your positivity, and your warmth will be particularly missed, and I know these hallmarks will continue back within your home and nation. Wishing you all the best and looking forward to properly commemorating your achievement at some point soon. You helped to make the Class of 2020 a particularly memorable and accomplished one.”

Professor Ned Blackhawk