

Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members
Receiving Emeritus Status



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colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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Faculty Members Receiving Emeritus Status

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Arcadio Díaz-Quñones



Arcadio Díaz-Quñones is one of the finest and most prominent Caribbean public intellectuals of his time, a talented writer and scholar whose essays already have become classics in the Latin American and Latino/a modern literary canon, and an extraordinary teacher who has inspired generations of undergraduate and graduate students at Princeton and elsewhere.

Arcadio received a B.A. (1961) and a M.A. (1963) in Hispanic studies from the University of Río Piedras, Puerto Rico, and completed his graduate training at the Universidad Central de Madrid, Spain, with a doctoral dissertation on the uses of the Spanish language in 16th-century colonial archival documents, under the supervision of the legendary Spanish scholar Rafael Lapesa. He taught at the Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, from 1970 to 1982, before joining the Princeton University faculty in 1983. In recognition of the excellence of his scholarship and teaching, he was named the Emory L. Ford Professor of Spanish in 1999. He also served as director of the Program in Latin American Studies at Princeton for six years, when with extraordinary determination and inspirational leadership he vigorously transformed the program into one of the strongest and most visible programs on campus, with a stellar interdisciplinary team of faculty members and a thriving community of undergraduate and graduate students.

Arcadio's accomplishments as a scholar and essayist are many and varied. His main fields of interest have been Latin American cultural and intellectual history and Caribbean poetry. He has devoted many articles to the role of poets and intellectuals in Hispanic-Caribbean society, including Luis Palés Matos, Antonio S. Pedreira, and Pedro Henríquez Ureña. Among his many contributions to Caribbean intellectual and literary history are his polished editions of works by Caribbean writers and public intellectuals such as Luis Rafael Sánchez, Tomás Blanco, Cintio

Vitier, and José Luis González. His publications include *El almuerzo en la hierba* (1982); an edition of *El prejuicio racial en Puerto Rico*, by Tomás Blanco (1985); an edition of works by Luis Lloréns Torres, *Verso y prosa* (1986); a study on the Cuban poet Cintio Vitier: *La memoria integradora* (1987); and an edition of Sánchez's Puerto Rican classic *La guaracha del macho Camacho* (2003). But it is perhaps within the long and prestigious tradition of the Latin American essay where Arcadio has left his most indelible mark, with classics such as *La memoria rota: ensayos sobre cultura y política* (1993) and *El arte de bregar: ensayos* (2000), both preoccupied with tracing the elusive archive of experiences born from a long and contradictory colonial history. *El arte de bregar* offers a dazzling exploration of the Puerto Rican local uses of the word *bregar* as a symptomatological signifier condensing the traumatic traces of a Caribbean political unconscious. In *Sobre los principios: los intelectuales caribeños y la tradición*, published in 2006, Arcadio directs his erudition and elegant writing to the study of the anxious relationship of Caribbean writers with the notion of tradition, as it was conceived by Latin American leading intellectuals such as Pedro Henríquez Ureña, José Martí, Fernando Ortiz, Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez, Antonio S. Pedreira, and Tomás Blanco, or figures related to the Hispanic trans-Atlantic such as the Spaniard Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, who was interested in the role of the last Spanish colonies in modern Hispanism. In Arcadio's exquisite analysis, Caribbean intellectuals see themselves confronted with a continuous dilemma between a sense of belonging to a "Hispanic" common tradition and the threat of its dissolution, which forced them to re-visit over and over the question of the origins of a national culture.

Besides being a distinguished scholar, Arcadio has been an extraordinary teacher. He has always stressed that teaching is one of the highest and most challenging forms of intellectual engagement. Whether leading a graduate seminar on the question of memory and power, analyzing a poem by Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral, or directing a senior thesis or a doctoral thesis, he has brought the excitement of scholarship and the passion of literary writing to all his students. Two of his regular offerings at Princeton, "Introduction to Spanish

American Literature” and “Introduction to Latin American Poetry,” became legendary courses within the undergraduate community. For many students, the “Princeton experience” was not complete until they had the opportunity to attend Arcadio’s famous lectures. The powerful, enduring effects of his commitment to teaching have created a vast web of enthusiastic and grateful heirs and disciples, forever touched by his knowledge, his wit, and the love of learning.