



Argentine theater group collaborative residency at JMU April 12 to 17, 2026

Project Overview

The Argentine theater director and playwright, Rubén Mosquera, and two professional Argentine actors, Milagros Mongia, and Sol Leone, will visit Virginia in April to perform a play about iconic Argentine women, *Between Scenes and Voices*, [*Entre Voces y Escenas*], visit classes to discuss Argentine history and theater, and engage in public discussions about the role of theater in society. They were originally invited by the University of Virginia and JMU has been included in the planning for this group's third visit to Virginia, the second to JMU.

This one-week residency will immerse JMU students in the process of theater making and deepen connections between Argentine theater practitioners, undergraduate students, the CGE summer study abroad program to Buenos Aires, and faculty members, including the Madison Hispanic Caucus. The visit presents a unique opportunity to break through disciplinary silos at JMU. The visit will involve students and faculty from the Departments of World Languages and Cultures, History, Honors, General Education, and Theatre and Performance Studies and the Latin American, Latinx and Caribbean Studies minor. We estimate that up to 200 members of the JMU and Harrisonburg community can interact with this theater group.

Rubén has written a play, *Between Scenes and Voices*, expressly for this visit to JMU and UVA. He has collaborated with myself and Dr. Erica Cobb at UVA to write a play that incorporates

our interests in Argentine language and history with his in independent theater, and the role of women and history in shaping contemporary society. This play pulls characters from many of his previous plays into one which takes pieces of his previous plays to deliver an ensemble performance of iconic women throughout Argentina's history. Dr. Cobb will translate the play with students at UVA and share that translation with JMU.

The play introduces students to themes of patriarchy, independence, social change in Argentina from the nineteenth century to the present. Students will be introduced to the role of women in contemporary Argentina, through historical female figures such as Guadalupe Cuenca (1820), Felicitas Guerrero (1870), Julieta Lanteri and Alfonsina Storni (early decades of the 20th century), as well as symbols like the white scarf of a Mother of Plaza de Mayo (1976-present) and the green scarf in the reproductive rights movement in Argentina. [For more detail, see the summary of the play at the end of this proposal.]

The residency at JMU culminates on Thursday night, April 16, with the public performance of the play at the Forbes Studio Theater. Throughout the week, activities are being scheduled that include student-led bilingual dialogue with the artists, the creation of an immersive global learning experience in which students engage Argentina's language, history, and contemporary culture through live theatre, conversation, and intercultural exchange.

This residency is the second collaboration related to Rubén's work between the University of Virginia and James Madison University. Another of Rubén's socially engaged plays, *The Beauty in Her Cage* [*La bella en su jaula*], was performed at JMU in November of 2023 at Forbes Studio Theater. An overview of the residency, including a list of activities we carried out at JMU is viewable [here](#).

Mosquera's work merges theater, history, memory, and gender in innovative productions. These themes are relevant to many of us who teach about Latin America. Mosquera's plays often dovetail with my own research. For example, Dr. McCleary recently published an article about Julieta Lanteri, one of the figures in the play he is bringing to JMU, with JMU's *Journal of International Responsibility*. [McCleary, Kristen (2025) "[Julieta Lanteri](#) and Political Caricature: The Democratic Reach of Commercial Theater and the Expansion of the Public Sphere, Buenos Aires, Argentina," *International Journal on Responsibility*: Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 9.

In addition, Dr. McCleary has incorporated Rubén's play, *Las Putas de San Julian* [*The Prostitutes of San Julian*], in her book, *Staging Buenos Aires: Theater, Politics and Society in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1860-1920*, (2024 University of Pittsburgh Press.) *Las Putas de San Julian* brings to the stage a small historical episode recounted in Osvaldo Bayer's history, *Rebellion in Patagonia*. Bayer, a highly esteemed Argentine historian, actually performed as narrator in *Las Putas de San Julian* when it was first staged. He passed away shortly after that performance. Dr. McCleary has seen it performed in Virginia and in Buenos Aires.

Each year since 2018, in which the study abroad program from JMU has been able to operate in Buenos Aires, JMU students have attended Mosquera's plays at the Actor's Studio. They have engaged in dialogue with Mosquera and the performers actors about the role of independent theater in Argentina, in addition to connection between play content and Argentine history. Last year, JMU students in Buenos Aires performed improvisational skits at the Actor's Studio, specifically designed for them by Mosquera. One activity had them acting out different movements and sounds that recreated a street scene of Buenos Aires.

Rubén speaks only Spanish but Sol is bilingual. JMU bilingual faculty and the actresses will carryout translations in any discussion setting as we did in Fall 2023.

Play Summary:

Between Voices and Scenes highlights iconic historical Argentine women, most of whom have been central characters in Rubén's recent plays. The playwright, performed by Rubén, and actresses intervene on the stage to discuss the unique role that theater plays in Argentine society, focusing on the role of women and social change. The central theme of the play is described by the playwright at the start of the play: "The history of the world changed every time a woman decided not to remain silent."

The female characters highlighted in the play appear in pairs. The first women on stage represent Argentina's colonial era. Felicitas Guerrero, the protagonist of *La bella en su jaula*,

a woman who was objectified for her beauty which also provoked jealousy and her tragic death at the hands of a jilted suitor. Guerrero historically speaking is thought of as the first femicide in Argentine history—or at least amongst the social elites. The second figure is Guadalupe Cuenca, a woman who wrote letters to her husband, Mariano Moreno, one of the founder's of independence, when he was sent to Europe in 1811. Moreno never reached his destination—he was poisoned on the ship—killed so that his revolutionary ideas would not take root in a post-independence society. Guadalupe was left to tell his story.

The next pairing are the figures, Julieta Lanteri, one of the first female medical doctors in Argentina most known for her advocacy in support of women's suffrage, and Alfonsina Storni, a prominent poet who was the first to share a woman's perspective in salons of the era.

The third pairing consists of women who represent climate activists and women who wear green scarves to symbolize their struggle for reproductive rights, hope, and health in contemporary society. Finally, a Mother of the Plaza de Mayo—the women whose children had been disappeared by the civic military dictatorship of 1976-1983 and who were the first group of civil society to confront the dictators, take the stage. These mothers offer a perspective on the rise of hate and its polarizing and violent outcomes if not stopped through democratic political movements.

Throughout the play, the playwright and actresses make comments about their characters and the role that theater plays in holding up a mirror to society and by drawing from history to so. In sum, the play views women's voice as essential to social change. It centers scenes of important Argentine female figures:

Julieta Lanteri (1873-1932), an iconic figure in the Argentine suffrage movement and Alfonsina Storni (1892-1938), a well-known Argentine poet and writer.

Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo

Women Imprisoned in the Civic- Military Dictatorship (1976-83)

Climate Activists

The Green Scarf Movement or Green Wave

Activists who fight to end femicide, *Ni una menos* [*Not One Woman Less*]

Brief Bios of Group Members:

Rubén Mosquera is a playwright and theater director who works on the independent theater circuit. Rubén Mosquera's professional website can be accessed [here](#). He also serves as executive director and lighting technician for his plays.

Rubén has been influenced by the ideas of Pedro Asquini and Juan Carlos Gené, and considers theater as a tool for social and political transformation. His stagings are austere, managing with low-cost budgets, relying more on imagination than monetary investment.

From 2009 to date he has written more than twenty plays and staged them in the independent circuit of Buenos Aires, in what can be labeled as "author theater." He only stages plays that he speak to themes of citizenship in the 21st century, often through historical theatrical experiences. A builder of a personal poetics, of his own universe, he applies principles of architecture, plastic, dance, music, literature, singing and other expressions, to carry out his vision. These techniques serve as a vehicle for what he wishes to manifest.

He has performed plays in several Buenos Aires theaters and also took some of his plays to several cities in the interior, and has also presented stagings of his plays and given lectures on his thinking about theater, and especially on independent theater in Buenos Aires at the following universities in the USA: Virginia (Uva), James Madison University (JMU) in Harrisonburg, University of Maryland (UMBC), Morgan State (MSU) and Towson University, Baltimore. Among his main works can be highlighted as an example "The Whores of San Julián", "The Beauty in Her Cage", "Love and Memory" (El amor y la memoria), "The Subtle Weakness of the King", "Molded in Image and Likeness" and "The Shadow Behind the Smile," "Antinomy," "Doña Petra Gave Birth in the Middle of the Street" (Doña Petra parió en medio de la calle) among others.

Griselda Milagros Mongia is an actress, with a degree in Dramatic Art from the University of El Salvador, she has been doing theater since she was 13 years old, she has worked under the direction of Rubén Mosquera in works such as "El amor y la memoria", "Antinomia" and "Doña Petra parió en medio de la calle", she has participated in the "Brisk" International Festival, she toured the north of Argentina and also in La Paz (Bolivia) with "El destello", and she has been working for years on the independent scene as an actress and also as an assistant director.

Sol Leone Martens is an actress, with a degree in Performing Arts from the Universidad Argentina de la Empresa. With more than five years of experience in the theatrical field, she has participated in various productions with Rubén Mosquera such as "The War of the Four

Battles", "The Beauty in Her Cage" and "Letters to Nowhere." She was also part of the productions of "La Dama Boba" in a professional university context. She also has a background in dance and singing. She is bilingual in English and Spanish.

Collaborations:

Several collaborations will occur during the week's visit providing JMU students and faculty with a unique opportunity to think about curriculum, public history, the role of theater in education, social change, and as leisure time entertainment.

Performance of Play, April 16, 7 pm, Forbes Studio Theater

All JMU students will be invited to attend the play. We expect that students will mainly come from the classes that are incorporated into the curricular activities as well as Spanish language classes which will offer extra credit for attending the play. The English translation will be available in advance and at the door via qr code. We are hoping to get subtitles of the play projected during the performance but this is not confirmed.

Class and Panel Discussions

In addition to the performance of the play, there will be opportunities to discuss the play's historical and cultural meanings with its author and performers, attend a professional Spanish-language performance, and have access to an English-language translation of the play. The ability to integrate Argentine theater into JMU classes and across organizations and departments underscores the strong international as well as state-level collaborations of faculty and students that are cultivated and supported by study abroad and the mission of JMU.

The theater group can offer talks on the following themes:

- A question and answer session following the performance to talk about the play's historical themes, the choices actors made to represent characters, and the role of independent theater in Argentina today.
- Motivational talks to promote the play, where discussions cover the central themes of the play, such as the roles of women in social change, femicide, civic military dictatorship, violence against women, and social change related to climate change.
- Talks directed towards the role of independent theater in Buenos Aires, the history of theater in Argentina, relationship between culture and economics, and the role of theater in establishing and deepening democracy.

- Workshops directed towards theater students with theater exercises, improvisational exercises, and discussions with the actors about their work in theater. These exercises can be adapted to the particular needs of classes and professors with advance notice.

Cross Campus Connections and Collaborations

The Argentine group has the potential to connect with roughly 200 students and faculty. Two years ago, for example, the Forbes theater which was configured for 120 the night of the performance, was completely full. In addition, Rubén and the actresses will visit about five undergraduate classes, meet with Harrisonburg High School students, and have at least one open discussion, and a question and answer session after the play.

Curricular Support and Guides

LAXC 252 Honors students, Spring 2026, created a curriculum guide for *Entre escenas y voces* available [here](#). This research guide follows the model of the one Dr. McCleary's Hist 447 (South America) class did in the Fall of 2023. That guide, Historical Background for Ruben Mosquera's *The Beauty in Her Cages*, which focuses on the first femicide in Argentina related to the murder of Felicitas Guerrero, a character in *Entre escenas y voces*, as well, is [viewable](#) here.

CGE and Study Abroad

Over the last few years, students from JMU's summer study abroad have attended many of Rubén's plays in Argentina. These plays tend to explore Argentine history through the roles of women. All have been performed at the Actor Studio Teatro in Buenos Aires. Students have collaborated with Mosquera, the actors, and the actors and technical support team. In July 2025, students participated in a day of talks about theater and partook in some improvisational theatrical activities as part of the study abroad trip to Buenos Aires.

Students in the 2023 and 2024 study abroad to Buenos Aires attended Rubén's plays and met him and the actresses, including *La bella en su jaula*, *Moldeada a imagen y semejanza* [*Molded in Image and Likeness*], and *Cartas de ninguna parte* [*Letters from nowhere*].

In 2025, students who were in the JMU study abroad program to Buenos Aires participated in a day of theater with Rubén and Sol Leone. Activities included a discussion about the role of independent theater in Argentina, how actors bring historical characters to life, and the life of an actor and playwright in Argentina. Students also participated in an improv class where they recreated the street life of Buenos Aires through repetitive motions, sound effects, and brief dialogue. Students from 2025 also attended the play, *Cartas de Ninguna Parte*, about one of Argentina's independence leaders, Mariano Moreno, and the letters he wrote to his wife which went nowhere as he was held captive on a ship and then killed, so that his ideas for radical social change would not be implemented.

Group availability for meetings:

Meeting availability to discuss Learning goals while at the Studio Theatre (10:00-11:30am) on Wed. April 15

Margaret: Every day between 11:40 and 1:25 or most days at 3pm.

Kristen: MWF, time dependent.

Ruben: keeps his schedule open for Fridays at 1 pm for zoom meetings (can be flexible). The Group will arrive to UVA April 6th.

Rachel: 11:40-1:25 any day (except Mon March 23 and Wed March 25) and 3 on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Carlos: Weekdays, 11:40-1:25, except April 8-12.

Class Visits and Schedule

Sunday, April 12

The group arrives to to Hotel Madison

Hotel Reservation details:

Confirmation numbers:

6067979776-1 (Sol y Milagros)

2636643456-1 (Ruben)

Madison Hispanic Caucus

Dinner with Madison Hispanic Caucus Sunday at 6 pm

Dr. Yenisei Montes de Oca organized a dinner between the Argentine group and the Madison Hispanic Caucus, an organization whose purpose is to be an advocate for Latinx issues in higher education.

The goals of the Madison Hispanic Caucus are to cultivate a supportive and inclusive community on campus, promote social and cultural dimensions of Latinx topics as related to education and well-being, and encourage a vibrant engagement with the diversity of Latinx cultures. I frequently talk to Rubén as we plan events for this year's visit. He has mentioned how much he enjoyed this dinner several times, in particular, highlighting the lively conversation and connections made between JMU faculty and the Argentine theater practitioners.

Monday, April 13

Meet with Kristen in the am-lunch vouchers

Lunch with Kristen and Dr. Blake (Grace and Main cafe at Hotel Madison)

Afternoon review schedule for the week

Dinner with Rachel Rhoades-discuss Wednesday PIR event

Tuesday, April 14

Class Visit No. One

Dr. McCleary's LAXC 252 Honors-Introduction to Latin American and Caribbean Studies
[Discuss the role of independent theater in centering the role of women in social change.
This is the class that will have developed the curriculum support /teaching guide.]

Time: 11:10 to 12:30

Participants: Sol, Milagros, Ruben

Location: Wilson Hall 1041

Class Visit No. Two

Time: 12:45pm-2pm

Location: Darcus Johnson 1006

SPAN 335 A Journey Through Literature

[Discuss theater as a literary genre, women's voices in dramatic traditions, and theater as a vehicle for historical memory, resistance, and cultural dialogue]

Participants: Reuben, Sol, Milagros

Class visit No. Three

SPAN 446 20th Century Spain Through Film and Literature [Discuss modern theater as a site of historical memory, gender, and social critique; comparative perspectives between Spanish and Argentine theater; and the role of performance in responding to dictatorship, censorship, and social change;

Time: 2:20 to 3:35

Location: Darcus Johnson 1006

Participant (s): Rubén and Milagros

Hist 300–Historical Methods

Dr. McCleary class

Time: 2:20 to 3:35

Public history and the role of history and theater in Buenos Aires

Discuss intersections between theater and history, public history, storytelling, and the connections of fact and fiction.

Participant: Sol Leone

Location: Wilson Hall 2041

Wednesday, April 15

Professor-in-Residence (PIR) collaboration with Carlos Aleman and Margaret Romero and heritage speaker students from Harrisonburg High School class "Cine y teatro," for students in Spanish 5 Honors & Heritage 3 Honors (grades 9-12). About 20 students will visit JMU Wednesday, April 15, 10:00-11:30am, Studio Theatre, and then have lunch. The visit will incorporate learning about social movements in Argentina and Latin America and a theater/improv activity in the Forbes Studio Theatre. Carlos has arranged for lunch, Margaret has arranged for a bus. Kristin Wylie and LAXC interns will meet the students off the bus and help to navigate campus. Kristin Wylie will also join the lunch.

Harrisonburg High School Heritage Spanish Speakers and the Professor-in-Residence program

The Professors-In-Residence program (PIR) is a James Madison University (JMU) educational outreach to promote postsecondary attainment and college aspirations of economically challenged and underrepresented students at Virginia's middle and high schools. Dr. Carlos Aleman is coordinating this visit with students from Harrisonburg High School.

Schedule:

10:05 to 10: 15

Ice breaker:

Empezar hablando sobre Argentina–vocabulario y cultura

Introductions and Argentina Ice Breaker: What do students know about Argentina? Discuss Argentine-specific vocabulary–introduce lunfardo words (laburo (trabajo), mina (mujer), guita (dinero), pibe (joven), morfar (comer), quilombo (lío) y trucho (falso) che (amigo); show them mate tea.

10:15 to 10: 30

Ruben discusses role of theater in Argentina, how he became a playwright, importance of theater in society; independent theater

10:30 to 10:45

Actors perform a preselected scene from *Entre escenas y voces*

Actors discuss choices they made in the scene

Actresses discuss their lives acting in Argentina. (how they became interested, answer student questions)

11:00 am

Group work and improv scene or act out pre-selected scene of the play

Ruben returns to discuss more about Argentine theater

Wednesday, April 15

Reception and Talk for History, WGSS, LAXC minors, LAXC Honors classes
Spring 2026, and Argentine Study Abroad Students

Time: 6 to 7 pm

Location: La Casita, Moody 113 and 102

Coordinator: Dr. Yenisei Montes de Oca

This reception will be open to students majoring in history, and/or minoring in History, students majoring or minoring in Spanish, Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean students, and students who participated in the Study Abroad from 2023, 2024, and 2025. We will also include students who are accepted into the program for July 2026. It will follow a panel discussion directed towards these student populations at JMU.

Thursday, April 16th

Get access at 9 am to the theater

Joey to help with lights

2:20-3:35pm

Forbes 1298 (Meet in the front lobby @2pm)

STAD322 Equity, Access and Inclusion in Education and Performance

The class is half Disability Studies Minors and half Theatre Education students that have already taken an intro class with me last semester. I LOVE interdisciplinary peer learning and teaching!

[4 a 7 tiempo para preparar]

The performers will be at Forbes Studio Theatre all day preparing for the performance

Friday, April 17

Available for one or two class visits/discussions or informal chats/meals

Student-authored profile for the JMU Breeze

Charles Bodenstein, a student on the 2025 study abroad program, writes for the JMU Breeze and has gotten approval from the editors to write a profile of the Argentine theater practitioners this spring.

Contact at JMU:

Kristen McCleary

mcckleakl@jmu.edu

540-908-0136

Contact at UVA:

Miguel Angel Valladares Llata

Research Faculty Librarian for Global Studies, Romance languages & Latin American Studies

University of Virginia, Main Library, PO Box 400114

Charlottesville, VA 22904-4104

Email: mav4n@virginia.edu;

phone: 434 422 2608

Dr. [Erica Cobb](#)

Adjunct Professor of Spanish and Translations

Email: gsb3ta@virginia.edu

Play Themes:

Argentine Theater and Performance History

Femicide in Latin/South America

Ni Una Menos Movement in Argentina—links to contemporary issues [nos queremos vivas in mexico]

Disappearances [linking this to Afro-Argentina and military dictatorship; use of DNA to recover history/identities]

Gender Transformations in Argentina/South America [Gender Identity Law, Same Sex Adoption, Trans Rights]

Patriarchy and Masculinity [founding fathers of independence, military dictatorships, legal codes]

Brief bios of Felicitas Guerrero, Alfonsina Storni, Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo (Hebe de Bonafini, Azucena Villaflor), Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo (or individuals like Estela Carlota), climate activist, [Nicole Becker](#), interviews of the [Mothers](#)

Resistance to military dictatorships

Women's suffrage movement

Role of theater and historical memory in democratic political systems

The play will be performed at JMU's Theatre Studio on Thursday, April 16, 2026. Dr. [Erica Cobb](#) from UVA will be translating the play in the early part of the spring semester with her class, making it available to the JMU community in March. A QR code will be available in advance for English translation.

Broad Impacts of the One-Week Residency

This project supports the study abroad to Argentina program as well as introduces students to international themes and the role of performance in public history, by bringing Argentina to our campus for one week.

While this residency results in a variety of collaborations that touch on all levels of engagement, it supports JMU's mission of Engaged Learning: Developing deep, purposeful and reflective learning, through classroom, campus, and community experiences in the pursuit, creation, application and dissemination of knowledge, in particular. Some of the specific contributions to this area of engaged learning include:

- **Transformative Learning:** Students gain real-world experience in collaborative intercultural dialogue, research, and performance.
- **Cross-Curricular Collaboration:** Spanish, Theatre, History, General Education, and Honors students will have a shared curriculum related to the play.
- **Community Engagement:** The performance and Q&A will be open to all JMU students and community members. In particular, we will have an organized discussion with heritage speakers from Harrisonburg High School.
- **Global Reach:** The collaboration between JMU and Mosquera will continue in Summer of 2026, building on previous collaborations from 2018, 2023, 2024, and 2025 in Virginia and Argentina.
- **Pedagogical Continuity:** The project aligns the Spanish curriculum vertically, engaging both introductory (LAXC 252 Honors), History 300 and advanced (SPAN 400-level) students.
- **Sustainable Model:** The residency demonstrates how theatre can be integrated across different course levels, providing a replicable model for future collaborations

Specific Connections, Collaborations, and Events:

- A public bilingual performance and Q&A at UVA and JMU.
- A cross-institutional exchange with University of Virginia.
- A model for pedagogy that integrates research, performance, and community engagement into the classroom
- Conversations related to international perspectives about the role of women in society and social change through at least five undergraduate classes at JMU.

- One open bi-lingual panel discussion for the general JMU public followed by a reception.
- Collaboration with Majors and Minors: Womens, Gender and Sexuality Studies, History, General Education, Honors, World Languages and Cultures, Theater and Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean Studies
- Deepening ties with Argentine Theater Practitioners and JMU Study Abroad Students

Publicity Details for JMU

Jeremiah Spencer will develop promotional materials for the play and for the reception.
 He will adapt the following language and images and put them up on screens across campus
 Dr. McCleary will email the LAXC faculty
 Dr. McCleary will email minor coordinators



Publicity from UVA

Dr. McCleary will coordinate class visits and develop a panel discussion
 Dr. McCleary will confirm tech support with Brian Smallwood
 Dr. Montes de Oca will organize Madison Hispanic Caucus Dinner and help coordinate a reception for Spanish majors, and a variety of minors
 Dr. Carlos Aleman is the organizer for Harrisonburg High School events in his role as Professor-in-Residence.
 LAXC is helping coordinate funds (Dr. Wylie and Jeremiah Spencer)

Fundraising Grant Request:

I am writing to ask for financial support in bringing a theater group from Argentina to JMU. Faculty from James Madison University and the University of Virginia are organizing a visit of the theater writer and director, [Rubén Mosquera](#), for April 2026. He will be staging a play, *Between voices and scenes*, [*Entre voces y escenas*] on April 16 at 7 pm at the Studio Theater in the Forbes Performing Arts Center.

Funding Contact at JMU

Jeremiah Spencer

spenc8ja@jmu.edu

540-568-7786

AAAD, Administrative Asst- AAAD

[Moody Hall 108B](#)

MSC 1209

LAXC org code is 100788