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Liberty as Heresy (Why One Writes a Novel) , Lecture by Leonardo Padura

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Cuban Research Institute

School of International and Public Affairs



Liberty as Heresy (Why One Writes a Novel)

Lecture by Leonardo Padura

Comments by Dr. Javier Figueroa

February 18, 2014 | 3:30 PM | FIU Modesto A. Maidique Campus | Graham Center, Central Ballroom

In this lecture, Leonardo Padura reflects upon the origins of his last novel, *Herejes* (*Heretics*, 2013). The novel's point of departure is the tragic episode of the SS *St. Louis*, a German ship with 937 Jewish refugees, which arrived in Havana harbor in 1939, but was never allowed to disembark. Padura traces the roots of his novel to his travels in Amsterdam and his interest in Rembrandt's painting, as well as his readings on the history of the Jewish diaspora. He then explains how he transformed historical materials into a work of fiction, specifically a detective story. He also describes how he came to chronicle the experience of the Jews who left Cuba in the 1960s and settled in Miami Beach.

Leonardo Padura Fuentes (b. 1955) is one of the most prestigious and prolific Cuban writers. Born in Havana, he first became prominent as an investigative journalist and subsequently as an essayist, screenplay writer, short story writer, and novelist. His work has been translated into 17 languages, including English, French, and German. Padura is best known in the English-speaking world for his series of detective novels featuring Mario Conde. In 2002, he published the critically acclaimed *La novela de mi vida* (*The Story of My Life*). His widely read novel *El hombre que amaba los perros* (2009) has just been translated as *The Man Who Loved Dogs* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014). Padura has won the International Dashiell Hammett Prize for best crime novel three times, as well as the 2011 Roger Caillois Prize and the 2012 National Prize in Literature.

This lecture, to be delivered in Spanish, is free and open to the public. It is cosponsored by FIU's Latin American and Caribbean Center and the Department of Modern Languages and Fundación Amistad. For more information, call (305) 348-1991 or write cri@fiu.edu. Please [click here](#) for required online registration.