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Gladys Ganiel
University of Maine

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Ganiel, Gladys, "Visiting Libra Professor Lloyd Rogler to Present Week-long Program on Cultural Diversity" (2001). *Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion*. 284.
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University of Maine News

Visiting Libra Professor Lloyd Rogler to Present Week-long Program on Cultural Diversity

Oct. 31, 2001

Media contact: Gladys Ganiel at (207) 581-3756

ORONO – Lloyd Rogler, the Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities at Fordham University in the Bronx, New York, has a full schedule of activities planned for his week-long visiting Libra Professorship for Diversity at the University of Maine, Nov. 5-9.

A public lecture, “The Dictatorship of the Questionnaire: Cultural Explorations in Mental Health Research,” highlights Rogler’s program. It is set for Monday, Nov. 5 from 7-8:30 p.m. at the University Club at Fogler Library.

The goals of the Libra Professorship include increasing the diversity of students and faculty and preparing graduates to understand and appreciate differences in a global society. It also seeks to provide students with outstanding faculty models for teaching, research and public service.

Rogler’s talk will describe how the research methodologies of American social scientists do not work effectively when they are applied without cultural modification. It will draw on Rogler’s research in Puerto Rico.

“Top-flight American social scientists came to the island to do research, and they were so concerned with methodologies that they didn’t take Puerto Rican culture into account. Knowing methods is not a substitute for not knowing cultures,” Rogler says.

Rogler’s other activities will emphasize the importance of cultural factors in health and illness, culture and health care delivery and culture and the social services in general.

He will lecture in eight sociology, psychology, social work and human development classes. He will conduct a workshop and luncheon, “Getting Money for Research: What I learned from Developing the Hispanic Research Center at Fordham University,” on Wednesday, Nov. 6 from 12:30-2:30 p.m. in the Mahogany Room at the Wells Conference Center; and a colloquium and reception, “Methodological Sources of Cultural Insensitivity in Mental Health Research,” Friday, Nov. 9 from 2:30-4 p.m. in 204 Fernald Hall.

Rogler, a native of Puerto Rico, says the growth of different cultures in the United States and increased international interaction make it important to understand a variety of cultures.

“The issue of cultural sensitivity in research is very important, both domestically and internationally,” he says.

Rogler has enjoyed a distinguished 40-year career in sociology and interdisciplinary studies in anthropology, psychology, psychiatry and history.

Before his 1974 appointment at Fordham, he held posts at the University of Puerto Rico, Yale and Case Western Reserve. He founded the Hispanic Research Center at Fordham in 1977 and has taught or lectured at Columbia University, the New York University/Bellevue Center and the Medical College and Graduate School of Medical Sciences at Cornell University, Harvard University and the University of Michigan.

Even before accepting the Libra Professorship, Maine had long been a part of Rogler's life. He first visited the state in 1961 and has maintained a cottage in Baileyville, on the St. Croix River and the Canadian border, for over 20 years. He uses it as a retreat – for writing and for fishing – during the summer months.

“I do all my writing up here. God only knows this is a good place to write. It's quiet,” Rogler says.

Rogler developed academic relationships with colleagues in UMaine's sociology department, and it was due to those contacts that his appointment as a Libra Professor occurred. He says he is looking forward to contributing to academic life in Maine.

“I consider it part of my identity to be a Mainer. And it's not just because I wear Dexter shoes,” he says.

Rogler's published works include: “Hispanics and Mental Health: A Framework for Research,” with L.H. Malgady and O. Rodriguez (1989); “Puerto Rican Families in New York City: Intergenerational Processes,” with Rosemary Santana Cooney, a study of how intergenerational processes affect the migration experience (1985); “Migrant in the City: the Life of a Puerto Rican Action Group,” a study of how minority groups develop organizations to represent their interests (1972); and “Trapped: Families and Schizophrenia,” with August B. Hollingshead, a study of how families living in the slums of San Juan coped with mental illness (1965). From 1993 to 1997 his publications were cited more than once a week, on the average, in professional journals in the United States, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia.