

DARTMOUTH

Department of Spanish and Portuguese

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Conference: George Ticknor ('1807) and his Legacy in the 21st century.

Director: José M. del Pino
Dartmouth Professor of Spanish
Fall 2019 - Spring 2020

This conference will celebrate the life and work of renowned Hispanist George Ticknor '1807, as well as his scholarly legacy. His love for classical and modern languages started at Dartmouth in 1805-07. He completed his education with one of the most influential literary historians of the day, Friedrich Bouterwek at University of Göttingen in Germany (1814-1818). After travelling to France, Spain and Portugal, Ticknor returned to the US to become the first Professor of French and Spanish of the newly created Smith Professorship of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard College in 1819. From that position and during almost two decades, Ticknor greatly contributed to strengthening the study of modern languages and literatures and their inclusion in the Harvard curriculum, a consequential step that was followed by the most prominent institutions of higher education in the US during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Some of his works include his lecture on "The Best Methods of Teaching the Living Languages" (1832) and his monumental *History of Spanish Literature*, 3 vols. (1849). Ticknor's *History*, based on the German idealist notion of *national* literatures, had an enormous influence. Translated into Spanish and French, it was adopted in Europe and the United States as the main guide for the study of Spanish Literature. Ticknor was also a prominent figure in the cultural scene of his native Boston. Part of his impressive personal library was bequeathed to the newly created Boston Public Library in 1852, an institution he helped establish. Other important figures very much influenced by Ticknor were Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who succeed him at the Smith Professorship, and historian William H. Prescott (a pioneer of modern historiographical research in the United States who published a seminal work on the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, as well as groundbreaking books about the conquest of Mexico and Peru). The conference will also pay attention to the figures of other American scholars, book collectors and philanthropists whose activities helped promote and disseminate Hispanic letters, arts, and culture in the United States, in particular the founder of the *Hispanic Society of America*, Archer Milton Huntington.

A group of notable specialists in the field, plus a cohort of Dartmouth colleagues will participate in studying the contributions of Ticknor and his circle to the establishment of the study of modern languages and the consolidation of literary history and philology in American universities, dominant trends until a few decades ago. In addition to this central perspective, participants will also expand this debate to other areas less developed in Ticknor's time, like the literary production of Latin American countries as well as the contested notion of *Hispanismo*.

***There will be two events: one in the Fall of 2019 and the other in Spring of 2020 (April 16-18). The first one will be devoted to Ticknor as language teacher and educator and the second to his contributions to the study of Spanish literature and Hispanic cultures in the United States, and his legacy for the 21st Century.*

FALL 2019

George Ticknor and the Teaching of the Modern Languages

Coordinated with Spanish Language Program Director Prof. Roberto Rey Agudo

Thursday, October 31st, 2019.

Haldeman 041 - 4:00 pm

Opening remarks

Dartmouth's George Ticknor and the Start of America's Spanish Craze

Richard L. Kagan (Academy Professor and Arthur O. Lovejoy Professor Emeritus of History, Johns Hopkins University).

Friday, November 1st, 2019

DCAL-Baker 102 - 2:00 pm

From George Ticknor's *The Best Methods of Teaching the Living Languages* (1832) to Best Methods in 2019.

2:00-2:15. Presentation

2:15-2:45

Two hundred years of Ticknor's legacy: what language proficiency can tell us about pedagogy

Fernando Rubio (University of Utah)

In this talk we will review the major trends in language pedagogy over the past 200 years and how different teaching approaches have shaped the proficiency of post-secondary students. In particular, we will discuss the findings of two major initiatives to measure language proficiency of undergraduates in the United States: the study conducted by John B. Carroll in 1967, and the Language Flagship Proficiency Initiative (2014-2017). We will also consider the implications of these findings for curricular approaches and what they may reveal about *the best method of teaching the living languages* in the 21st century.

2:45-3:15

Cognitive Linguistics and the Teaching of Living Languages: from 1832 to 2019

Reyes Llopis-García (Columbia University)

Already in 1832, George Ticknor delivered an unequivocal truth: Language instruction in general (and grammar in particular) must be methodologically adapted to seek quality teaching and meaningful

learning for the learners it aims to teach. His views on the teaching of the “living” languages (a much more fitting description than the current “foreign” nomenclature) were pedagogically sound and to this day, many of his recommendations still stand. Regarding the treatment of grammar in the classroom, I will argue that the field has come a long way from the days of syntax and prescriptive rules, and will present the possibilities offered by Cognitive Linguistics for a more effective understanding of the system. What we will discuss is a long way from what Ticknor’s time afforded, but many of the ideas from his lecture still resonate with these new approaches. Ticknor defended that the “essential genius and power of every language” stems from the actual use of its constructions, idioms, or phrases. A cognitive view of grammar presents windows into our metaphorical thinking, our embodied perception of the world, and a better understanding of language use that is truly alive.

Q&A 3:15-3:30

Coffee Break

3:45-4:15

Orientations to US Spanish Language Education in the 21st Century: Teaching National, Globalized and Minoritized Spanish

Alberto Bruzos Moro (Princeton University)

Drawing on Ofelia García’s (2011) three orientations in Spanish language planning and management, this presentation will examine the influence of nationalizing, globalizing and minoritizing performances of Spanish on US Spanish language education. First, I will consider George Ticknor’s 1832 lecture as an example of the nationalizing orientation that, in different forms, persisted until the 1990s. Then, I will discuss the gradual shift toward the globalized and proficiency-oriented approach to Spanish dominant at present. Finally, I will examine the contradictions presented by the minoritized status of Spanish in the US to both nationalizing and globalizing orientations to Spanish *as a foreign language*. To conclude, I will argue that, while effects produced by the three orientations coexist at present, there is little or no reflection on their radically diverse and often conflictual premises.

4:15-4:45

Beyond Methodology: Inter-American Politics and the Living Languages

Carlos Cortez Minchillo (Dartmouth College)

About one hundred years after George Ticknor delivered his lecture on “The Best Methods of Teaching the Living Languages,” defense, political and economic motivations led to stronger cultural ties between the United States and the other American republics. Within the framework of Pan-Americanism and the Good Neighbor policy, the teaching of Spanish and, to a lesser degree, Portuguese in the United States expanded considerably. By the same token, the translation of books from south of the Rio Grande gained momentum in the 1940s and arguably paved the way for the so-called “Latin American boom” in the post-Cuban Revolution era. However, despite the current popularity of learning Spanish as a second language, the results of the mid-20th-century efforts to foster cultural exchanges across the hemisphere are uneven. I will examine how the U.S. cultural diplomacy in the last century attempted to promote the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese and the translation of Latin American literary works into English. In addressing these topics, I will discuss how and to what extent power structures interfere in the teaching of languages and literatures and shape how symbolic goods produced by other cultures are perceived.

Q&A

4:45-5:00

5:10-5:50

Ticknor and the experiential language project of Fall 2018. The cultural adaptation of the student's environment: applying Ticknor's philosophy to teaching languages today

Paloma Asensio, Carmen Bascuñán, Gema Mayo-Prada, Rosa M. Matorras, Natalia Monetti, Irasema Saucedo (Dartmouth College)

Ticknor's philosophy of teaching of foreign languages in the early to mid-eighteen hundreds meant a revolutionary approach in language acquisition. According to him, "there is no *one* mode of teaching languages" and he considered that the ideal way to learn it would be to "reside where it is constantly spoken". Since not everybody would have the opportunity to reach that goal, he proposed somewhat "more artificial and indirect" ways to teach it, while still keeping the idea of language acquisition as a "living" and "spoken" experience. The Spanish Language project we created in the Fall of 2018 reflects this philosophy. Its purpose was to adapt the general environment in which the students live in a way that creates a mini-immersion experience that fosters the learning and practice of the Spanish language. The project connected all three Spanish courses with each other, with the Spanish Department, with La Casa, with the College, its community and its resources, and with the general local Hanover community. The result was a learning experience that took the students beyond the classrooms and, while still in their college surroundings, provided a creative and effective way to use their foreign language skills in real-life, in a cross-cultural approach.

Q&A

5:50-6:05

Closing remarks

Participants:

Paloma Asensio - Senior Lecturer of Spanish, Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Dartmouth

Carmen Bascuñán - Senior Lecturer of Spanish, Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Dartmouth

Alberto Bruzos Moro - Director of the Spanish Language Program, Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Princeton University

Carlos Cortez Minchillo - Associate Professor of Portuguese, Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Dartmouth

Reyes Llopis García - Senior Lecturer of Spanish, Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures at Columbia University

Richard L. Kagan - Professor of History- Emeritus, Johns Hopkins University

Rosa M. Matorras - Senior Lecturer of Spanish, Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Dartmouth

Gema M. Mayo-Prada - Senior Lecturer of Spanish, Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Dartmouth

Natalia X. Monetti - Senior Lecturer of Spanish, Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Dartmouth

Fernando Rubio - Professor of Spanish Linguistics in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, and Director of Second Language Teaching and Research Center and UOnline Curriculum Enhancement and Innovation at the University of Utah

Irasema Saucedo - Senior Lecturer of Spanish, Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Dartmouth

Spring 2020

George Ticknor and the study of Spanish literature and Hispanic cultures in the United States: A Legacy for the 21st Century

[Program to be announced in Winter of 2020]

This event is sponsored by Dartmouth 250 Anniversary Initiative, Leslie Center for the Humanities, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Associate Dean for the Arts and Humanities, and DCAL.