

**Department of Latin American and Latino Studies and *In the Thick* Present:
Latinos: Political Participation? Mobilization? Or Silenced & Set Aside?**

**DePaul University, Cortelyou Commons, 2324 N. Fremont Street, Chicago, IL 60614
May 11, 2017 (9:30am to 1:30pm)**

Before the 2016 election, everyone was predicting that the country's Latino population had arrived. But by 2017, during some of the most tumultuous months in recent American political history, Latinos are barely being mentioned in the national political conversation. Why? Join *In The Thick* co-hosts Maria Hinojosa and Julio Ricardo Varela as they lead a day that will provide deep and honest insight about Latinos, intersectionality and political power.

9:30-9:45 Introduction to the Program (Lourdes Torres and Maria Hinojosa)

Where Does It All Go Next? (9:45-10:45)

Days before the 2016 election, the media was calling it: Latinos were showing up to the polls in record numbers. Donald Trump's anti-Mexican comments had awoken a "sleeping giant." But was it true and does it even matter now, during a time of travel bans and ramped-up deportations? How does the Latino community forge ahead, and is it time to look at ways to ally with other groups who have also been affected by the president's tough rhetoric?

Maria Hinojosa and Julio Ricardo Varela, moderators

Panelists:

Enrique Acevedo (Anchor of the award-winning Noticiero Univision late-night edition)

Esther Cepeda (Nationally syndicated opinion columnist)

Will the US Ignore Latinos Now? (11:00am-12:00)

There was a brief time in 2016 where many in the Latino community felt "the moment" had arrived. But in 2017, Latinos seem to be a political sidenote. Or are they? Are Latinos truly being ignored by the country or has the community's reliance on identity politics led to underwhelming expectations? And how does the rest of the country look at Latinos today? A threat? A menace? Or the savior of the nation's economy?

Maria Hinojosa and Julio Ricardo Varela, moderators

Panelists:

Victoria DeFrancesca De Soto (Political scientist, MSNBC contributor)

Steve Cortes (Founder, Veracruz TJM, Latinos for Trump)

Lunch and Keynote Interview (12:15-1:30)

with **Justina Machado** (Puerto Rican actor from Chicago) and **Maria Hinojosa**

Confirmed Speakers:

Enrique Acevedo is anchor of the award-winning Noticiero Univision late-night edition. Since the start of his career in 2002, Acevedo has covered the news around the world for print, broadcast and digital media. He's also reported on every major news event in the U.S. for the past decade. During the 2016 presidential cycle he co-moderated Univision's Democratic Debate and led the network's electoral coverage along Maria Elena Salinas and Jorge Ramos. He has interviewed some of the most influential figures in the world among them President Barack Obama, Philanthropist Melinda Gates, Nobel Peace Prize winners Jody Williams, Desmond Tutu, Kofi Annan and Juan Manuel Santos, as well as many other global leaders in the fields of science, finance and technology. His work has been published in *The New York Times*, *El Pais*, *Reforma*, *Milenio*, *Letras Libres*, *Fusion* and *The New York Review of Magazines*. He has a master's degree in Journalism from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He's the recipient of a News & Documentary Emmy Award in the Outstanding Newscast or News Magazine category.

Esther J. Cepeda is an opinion journalist and expert on the issues of U.S. Hispanics/Latinos. She writes two columns a week for the Washington Post Writers Group and is also a marketing/communications expert, social media strategist and coach, and public speaker. Born and raised on the North Side of Chicago, in 2002. Cepeda began teaching as a bilingual teacher in low-income grammar and high schools in the suburbs of Chicago while working toward a Master's degree in Special Education from Roosevelt University. Before joining the *Chicago Sun-Times* in 2006, then becoming Chicago's first Latino metro columnist, Cepeda wrote about national and local politics and social issues for Illinois newspapers and magazines across the country. She wrote a weekly column for the Sun-Times until February 2012.

Steve Cortes has appeared daily on TV news programs for a decade. His broadcast career began at CNBC where he commented on financial markets, primarily as part of the "Fast Money" franchise. In recent years he transitioned to politics, serving in 2016 as a primary TV surrogate for the Trump presidential campaign and was named to Trump's Hispanic Advisory Council. Regarding his hundreds of TV hits on behalf of Team Trump, Maria Bartiromo of Fox News said "Steve was a strong communicator who understood very early on what the people wanted in a commander-in-chief." Post-election, Cortes remains an informal advisor to the President and signed-on with Fox News as a contributor.

Dr. Victoria M. DeFrancesco Soto is a political scientist providing political analysis on US politics and its implications for countries abroad. Victoria is a contributor to MSNBC and NBCNews.com as well as a regular political analyst for Telemundo. DeFrancesco Soto is also widely published in both academic and popular outlets such as POLITICO and Talking Points Memo. Through these different outlets, DeFrancesco Soto translates social science research into a more relatable

form of information for a wide variety of audiences. She received her Ph.D. from Duke University during which time she was a National Science Foundation Fellow. She is currently a Professor at the University of Texas where she was selected as one of the University's Game Changing faculty. DeFrancesco Soto teaches in the Department of Mexican-American and Latino Studies and is a Fellow at the Center for Politics and Governance at the LBJ School of Public Affairs.

Maria Hinojosa is an award-winning news anchor and reporter who covers America's untold stories and highlights today's critical issues. As the anchor and executive producer of NPR's only Latino news and culture show *Latino USA*, and anchor and executive producer for the PBS series *America By The Numbers with Maria Hinojosa*, she has informed millions about the changing cultural and political landscape in America and abroad. In 2016, Hinojosa became the host of *In The Thick*, Futuro Media's new political podcast, and *Humanizing America*, the company's digital video series. Hinojosa was born in Mexico City and raised in Chicago. She received her BA from Barnard College. She is currently the Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Chair of Latin American and Latino Studies at DePaul University in Chicago and a Global Post 'Voces' columnist.

Justina Machado is Puerto Rican actress born and raised in Chicago. In 1990, after graduating from Lane Tech, Machado moved to New York City. The experience which she had gained as a performer with the Latino Chicago Theater Company helped open the doors for her in that city. She is known for her roles as Vanessa Diaz on the HBO drama series *Six Feet Under*, and as Brenda on the drama *Queen of the South*. In 2017, Machado appeared on the Netflix show, *One Day at a Time*, in her first starring TV role. Machado has also participated in over fifteen films. Among her most notable roles so far have been Carmen Rodriguez in *She's So Lovely*, Isabella Hudson in *Final Destination 2*.

Julio Ricardo Varela is Digital Media Director for Futuro Media. He is a frequent contributor to the show and the editor of the show's official site, LatinoUSA.org. He also co-hosts *In The Thick* with Maria Hinojosa. In 2011, Julio founded LatinoRebels.com, one of the top U.S. Latino media sites in the world. Previously, Ricardo Varela was digital producer for Al Jazeera America's "The Stream" and his work has been featured in many global outlets, including the *Guardian*, ESPN, the *New York Times*, *Quartz*, *Le Monde*, WGBH, WNYC, *Face the Nation*, MSNBC, Fusion, Univision and Telemundo. He has made numerous national TV appearances for Latino USA and Futuro Media. A native of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Varela spent his childhood between San Juan and the Bronx. He was also a contributing reporter at *The Boston Globe*. Ricardo Varela graduated cum laude from Harvard College.