



Department of Modern Languages
2320 North Kenmore Avenue
Suite 310
Chicago, Illinois 60614-3210
773/325-7320
las.depaul.edu/mol

August 26, 2017

Dear CLA Members:

With great pride and enthusiasm I write to inform you that DePaul University will host the 2018 CLA convention in Chicago, Illinois. A host committee, composed of myself as chair, and other colleagues from our Department of Modern Languages, African and Black Diaspora Studies Program, and our Center for African and Black Diaspora, has dedicated its efforts to make the conference a forum for dialogue and a fertile space for intellectual and cultural exchange. This unique opportunity for dialogue and exchange has been bringing our members together annually for 78 years as of April 2018.

DePaul University was founded as a small college more than 100 years ago in Chicago, inspired by the work and mission of St. Vincent DePaul to serve the urban poor in 16th and 17th century Paris. Today DePaul is the largest Catholic University in the United States, striving to serve Chicago's urban communities and taking pride in the ethnic and religious diversity of its students, faculty and staff who hail from all over the Midwest and all over the world.

Chicago is well known as a business and convention center. And it is equally well known for the key roles played by its African American community in the development of jazz, blues, gospel, hip-hop and spoken word, political and religious movements, poetry and narrative and museums such as the DuSable Museum of African American History. Spanish-speaking communities, Asian communities and European communities are equally represented, and equally diverse, in creating the Chicago we know today. Chicago is also home to the American Indian Center of Chicago, the oldest urban Native American center in the country.

The 2018 CLA conference theme, "Native Sons/Daughters and Immigrants in the Black Metropolis" evokes Richard Wright, who spent his early adult and literary years in Chicago; evokes St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton whose groundbreaking post-World War II sociological study of race in the U.S. was set in Chicago; and foregrounds immigration and the contested roles of men and women, issues now playing out dramatically in Chicago neighborhood town halls, downtown's City Hall and at DePaul and other academic halls. Our theme will enable us to highlight the connection between our present and our past, and to emphasize the multidisciplinary nature that binds the teaching and research of CLA members. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Haki Madhubuti, an award-winning poet, one of the architects of the Black Arts Movement, an essayist, educator, and founder and publisher of Third World Press, based in Chicago. Dr. Madhubuti is also a life member of CLA. We are pleased that he accepted our invitation to join us at the conference.

We promise you an exciting conference. And we look forward to welcoming you to Chicago and to DePaul University.

Sincerely,

David Akbar Gilliam, Ph.D.
Host Committee Chair
Chair, Modern Languages
Associate Professor, Spanish