[Vanessa Díaz](#)

Associate Professor of Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies at Loyola Marymount University

Los Angeles, CA, US

Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts

Biography

Dr. Vanessa Díaz is an interdisciplinary ethnographer, filmmaker, and journalist. Her research focuses on race and gender in the production of media and popular culture across the Americas. Díaz?s award-winning book, Manufacturing Celebrity: How Latino Paparazzi and Women Reporters Build the Hollywood Industrial Complex, was published with Duke University Press (2020). Grounded in her experience as a red carpet reporter for People magazine, Manufacturing Celebrity focuses on hierarchies of labor as well as ethnoracial and gender politics in the production of celebrity-focused media. The research for Manufacturing Celebrity was supported by numerous grants and fellowships, including those from the Ford Foundation Fellows/National Academy of Sciences, the Smithsonian Institute, and the Historical Society of Southern California, among others. Díaz is also a co-author of UCLA?s 2017 Hollywood Diversity Report. In addition to her research on media and popular culture in the United States, she has also done extensive research on cultural production in the Caribbean and among its diasporas. In 2006, she completed her independent feature-length documentary Cuban HipHop: Desde el Principio (From the Beginning), which recounts the history of the Cuban HipHop movement while exploring how Afro-Cuban youth use HipHop to defy misconceptions about censorship in Cuba by delivering social critiques of racism and poverty on the island. Díaz teaches the course "Bad Bunny and Resistance in Puerto Rico" and is the co-creator of the Bad Bunny Syllabus Project, which seeks to educate the public on Bad Bunny's global impact & how it reflects political, artistic, and cultural triumphs and struggles within Puerto Rico. Díaz is called upon by publications ranging from The Atlantic, to the Los Angeles Times, to NPR to comment upon major events in popular culture. She is able to provide necessary context to understand how and why particular events capture the American popular imagination, while simultaneously revealing the hidden labor and racial struggles involved in the production of popular culture.

Industry Expertise

Writing and Editing, Print Media, Entertainment, Motion Pictures and Film, Media - Print, Media Production, Media - Online, Audio Visual, Music, Women

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Areas of Expertise

Music, oral & life histories, Latin America, political culture, diasporas, Labor & Employment, (im)migration, Nationalism, Latina/o/x identity, United States, Hollywood , Cuba, Caribbean, Bad Bunny, Puerto Rico, Celebrity Culture, Entertainment, Gender & Sexuality, race & racialization, Media & popular culture

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Affiliations

Ford Foundation Fellowship Annual Conference Planning Committee Member and Former Chair, Puerto Rican Studies Association, American Anthropological Association, New England Consortium of Latino Studies, Association of Latina & Latino Anthropologists, Latin American Studies Association, Society for the Anthropology of North America, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Latina/o Studies Association, National Association of Latino Independent Producers

Education

University of Michigan
Ph.D.

University of Michigan
M.A.

New York University
B.A.

Accomplishments

Association for Latina/o and Latinx Anthropologists Book Award
2022

Society for the Anthropology of Work Book Award
2022

Latin American Studies Association, Latinx Studies Section Book Award: Honorable Mention
2022

Historical Society of Southern California, Ahmanson Grant
2019

Dartmouth College César Chávez Postdoctoral Fellowship
2017-2018

Mellon Summer Institute on Tenure and Professional Advancement (SITPA) Scholar
2016-2018

Ford Foundation, Postdoctoral Fellowship
2016-2017

UCLA Institute of American Culture Visiting Researcher Program Award
2016-2017

UCLA Institute of American Cultures Research Grant in Ethnic Studies
2017

University of Michigan Louise Ann Williams Anthropology Distinguished Dissertation Award
2016

University of Michigan ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award, Anthropology Nominee
2015

American Anthropological Association (AAA) Annual Photo Contest Winner
2014

Ford Foundation, Dissertation Fellowship
2012-2013

Smithsonian Institute, Predoctoral Fellowship (National Museum of American History; National Portrait Gallery; Washington, D.C.)
2012-2013

Rackham Merit Fellowship, University of Michigan
2007-2014