



## Instructor Spotlight: Delia Cosentino



Pictured here with a panel from the series *Memoria (Memory)* (2005-2011) by Bibiana Suárez (Art, Media and Design)

Patrons ordering the taco special at the Student Center must choose between flour and corn tortillas. Students in my Focal Point Seminar will recognize how identity politics might guide that decision as much as personal taste: they know that maize has been a staple of indigenous American diets since ancient times while wheat was introduced to colonial Mexico as the domain of the Spanish elite.

In *Mexico City: Image and Imagination*, a segment on food culture includes excerpts from the 1625 chronicle of English Dominican Thomas Gage, whose travels through what was then the capital of New Spain exposed him to wholly unique culinary delights, like drinks made from cacao beans and a corn based gruel called *atole*. Such readings open up a discussion about how food relates to social identity, *mestizaje* (racial mixing), and the modern construction of

nationalism. We then retire to a local restaurant to sample Aztec-style hot chocolate; after all, what better way to the mind of a first year student than through her or his stomach?

Food is therefore an entrée. The main course is the notion that any place, at any time, has multiple and fluid identities.

This allows us to consider Mexico City from different disciplinary perspectives

and through a plurality of viewpoints: I teach the place as an historical and cultural palimpsest, as a territory imagined by different writers across time through the spacious word, and most significantly for my grounding in art history, as an urban setting revealed through visual representation. Students are trained to see art and architecture as primary sources that give shape to the city and are themselves mediated by civic realities. I also hope that when students order that taco special, not only is their hunger sated, but they are nourished by an appreciation for a rich and complicated set of traditions rooted back in Mexico's historic capital.

— Delia Cosentino  
Associate Professor  
*History of Art and Architecture*

## From the Director

At the end of this month (Friday, May 31), we will have our annual Best Practices event for Chicago Quarter Teaching Teams. This year we're in Student Center Room 120. Attendance is expected and it's an exciting time to bring together our new teams. The faculty portion will begin with check-in at 9:30 a.m. We will begin with announcements (including our new Learning Outcomes) that will affect this year's classes and then participate in a small group activity which should result in best practices we all can use. We will then group with our Staff Professionals and Student Mentors to learn about and discuss today's first year students, particularly as studied in this Spring's President's Book Club selection, *Generation on a Tightrope: A Portrait of Today's College Student* (by Arthur Levine & Diane R. Dean, Jossey-Bass, 2012). Lunch is provided. Please RSVP to the invitation you should have received from Maria Hernandez (or email me if you can't find it).

The annual First-Year Writing Showcase is coming up on Wednesday, May 15, 6-8 p.m. in Cortelyou Commons. Several Chicago Quarter and Focal Point Seminar classes are represented among the winning student essays. This is a celebration of student writing, so please consider attending. Refreshments will be provided. In addition, you are invited to participate in a free workshop with Showcase guest and author Andrea Lunsford, who will discuss "Teaching Strategies with the *St. Martin's Handbook*" on Thursday, May 16, from 9-10:30 a.m. in McGaw 205. Please RSVP to [wrd@depaul.edu](mailto:wrd@depaul.edu).

Have a good rest of Spring Quarter and hope to see everyone connected with Chicago Quarter on May 31!

— Doug Long

### Important dates!

- First-Year Writing Showcase: **May 15th**
- Andrea Lunsford Workshop: **May 16th**
- Chicago Quarter Best Practices: **May 31st**