

My name is Errol L. Montes-Pizarro. I am a mathematics professor at the University of Puerto Rico, Cayey Campus, with a strong interest and commitment to interdisciplinary research both in mathematics and musicology. During the last five years, I have been very active in doing research about modern African music. I disseminate my work through upper-level undergraduate seminars, public lectures, and through a weekly radio show I host and produce for the University of Puerto Rico Radio Station (Radio Universidad).

My work focuses around three interrelated topics: (1) influences of “New World” popular music traditions on modern popular African music, (2) strategies used by women in Africa and the Caribbean to successfully participate in their respective popular music traditions and in the music industry, and (3) on how music both reflects and promotes process of ethnic and political identity formation in the African Diaspora with particular emphasis on the constant interchange of influences between the Caribbean, Northeast Brazil and African countries. My one-hour radio program documents in an entertaining way these three aspects of African music (and music from the African Diaspora), taking into account its relationship with other aspect of African history, politics and culture and informed with the latest research both in musicology and cultural anthropology.

The seminar *Modern Jazz and the Political Imagination* fits perfectly with my research interests as it approaches the study of music from a social and anthropological perspective. I have taught seminar courses about diverse aspects of modern African music at my institution, specifically through the Honor’s Program, and lectured about African music at other Universities and at the High School level. Participation in this seminar will help me to better frame and conceptualize future courses and lectures.

My interest in music has also influenced my teaching of mathematics since in my courses I include discussions of the mathematics of musical instruments and about the mathematical ideas implicit in many musical traditions. Participation in this seminar will allow me to share and expand these ideas to jazz and learn from other participants who might have similar interdisciplinary interests.

Through this first experience with the Faculty Resource Network and with the seminar, I also hope to become better familiarized with academic initiatives that aim to encourage interdisciplinarity. Besides teaching and researching, I act as coordinator of research activities in a program sponsored by the National Institute of Health (NIH) and managed by the *Institute for Interdisciplinary Research* at our UPR Campus in Cayey. My role in this 5-year program is to promote communication and join research work between social and natural scientists and to coordinate seminar sessions similar to those sponsored by the Network. This summer experience can broaden my knowledge of how to structure and promote the exchange of ideas among faculty, enhancing my ability to coordinate research development activities for our faculty.

Finally, I am certain that participation in the seminar *Modern Jazz and the Political Imagination* will enhance my ability to promote the study and knowledge of modern African music and other Diasporic creations not only among university and high school students and faculty, but among the more general audience I am able to reach through my radio program in Puerto Rico.