

## **Introduction**

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Since 1991, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the Rutgers University Program in Latin American Studies (RULAS) have sponsored an annual Distinguished Graduate Lecturer and Undergraduate Workshop Series. The series for 1999-2000, titled "The Future and its Past: Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Studies at the Millennium," continued the tradition of offering panels, culturally relevant videos and movies, and hands-on workshops for our undergraduates, and bringing important scholars from various related fields to speak on the year's topic for the faculty, graduate, and undergraduate communities alike. Previous series have hosted special guest lecturers from universities such as NYU, Universidade de São Paulo, Tulane, Cambridge, Penn State, Illinois, Pittsburgh, CUNY, Kansas, Emory, UNAM, Michigan, Temple, Minnesota, Georgetown, Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Texas, and California. The 1999-2000 events revolved around the very global theme of the millennium. The various activities addressed the renegotiation of linguistic, aesthetic, and disciplinary boundaries as the twenty-first century approached. In addition to the two-day conference at the end of March 2000, the series sponsored several other presentations and workshops during Fall 1999 and Spring 2000, which included national and international scholars and intellectuals. The Co-Editors have decided that one issue of the journal per year will be dedicated to the work of the invited speakers from the previous lecturer series. The collection of articles found in this first volume of *Arachne@Rutgers*, therefore, compiles the presentations given during the 1999-2000 series. To a decade-long tradition of excellent presentations is now added, we hope, one of excellent literary, linguistic, and cultural publications. May you be as informed and inspired by them as we have.