



presents the Fall 2016

COLLOQUIA SERIES

**NEW RESEARCH ON WOMEN AND GENDER
GLOBAL AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES**

FRIDAY, November 18

1:30-3:00PM

115 INTERNATIONAL CENTER

SPECIAL LOCATION

**Delia Fernández
Department of History**

***“My Mom Planned Everything”:
An Examination of How Latinas Made Rural Work
Meet Urban Needs in Michigan, 1940s-70s***

This presentation examines the roles that Latinas played in maintaining their families' economic stability and meeting their social needs in West Michigan from the 1940s to the 1970s. As migrants from primarily Texas, Mexico, and Puerto Rico, Latinos found that they could not provide for their families through employment in just one industry. Instead, members of the same family would work in manufacturing, while others—usually mothers and children—toiled on Michigan fields to ensure that they had enough money to sustain themselves. While women were usually pegged as disposable employees, they used that position to become flexible workers who could facilitate the movement of themselves and their families into various industries. In addition, young women, in particular, often took on the task of finding and creating social events like dances in rural and urban areas to create fulfilling and exciting lives for themselves in an environment that did not have a plethora of familiar cultural resources. This work challenges the way that we understand Latino laborers and brings lived workers' experiences to the forefront.

Delia Fernández is an historian of Latina/o history whose work focuses on how Latina/os use panethnic identity to garner more political, social, and economic rights in the twentieth century. Her research and teaching interests also include the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality in American history. She is currently working on her manuscript, “Negotiating Latinidad: Identity, Community, and Civil Rights Activism in Post War Michigan.”

This event is free and open to the public.