

Macalester professor receives Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship for Recently Tenured Scholars

St. Paul, Minn. – History and Latin American Studies professor **Ernesto Capello** has received a Frederick Burkhardt Residential Fellowship for Recently Tenured Scholars. Burkhardt Fellowships support recently tenured faculty as they pursue long-term, unusually ambitious projects in the humanities and related social sciences at a consequential stage of their scholarly careers. Capello was one of 21 Burkhardt Fellows this year.



Capello will be in residence at Columbia University's Institute of Latin American Studies during the 2017-18 academic year. His project is titled, *Equator Imagined: Commemorating Geodesic Science in the Andes*.



“While Geodesy is an unusual branch of geographic science dedicated to measuring the shape of the Earth, in Ecuador, every child knows the story of the Franco-Hispanic Geodesic Mission (1736-42), when an international group of scientists led by the Frenchman Charles Marie de La Condamine traveled to the Spanish colony to measure the arc of the equatorial meridian,” said Capello.

What was the goal of the first mission? The scientists wanted to verify Newton's theory of gravity.

“This study considers the subsequent commemoration of this voyage through the elevation (and destruction) of pyramidal markers, Andean landscape paintings, a second French scientific mission redoing the 18th-century measurements, the development of modern tourist sites, and a counter-memorial tradition celebrating indigenous geodesic and astronomical knowledge.”

Geodesy is the science of accurately measuring and understanding three fundamental properties of the Earth: its geometric shape, its orientation in space, and its gravity field, as well as the changes of these properties with time.

The fellowship, which carries a \$75,000 stipend and a \$5,000 research budget, allows awardees to take up year-long residencies at institutions whose resources and scholarly communities are ideally suited to facilitate the proposed research project. These residencies may take place at one of 13 national and international research centers that partner with ACLS (American Council of Learned Societies) for this program.

Starting this year, applicants from liberal arts colleges also could propose residencies at university humanities centers or academic departments. The new opportunities offer a flexible set of residency options for college

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faculty while encouraging greater collaboration and exchange between liberal arts colleges and research university communities.

The Burkhardt Fellowships are supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and administered by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). They are named for Frederick Burkhardt, President Emeritus of ACLS, whose decades of work on The Correspondence of Charles Darwin constitute a signal example of dedication to a demanding and ambitious scholarly enterprise.

The mission of the American Council of Learned Societies is "the advancement of humanistic studies in all fields of learning in the humanities and the social sciences and the maintenance and strengthening of relations among the national societies devoted to such studies."

The ACLS is a private, nonprofit federation of 73 national scholarly organizations and is the preeminent representative of American scholarship in the humanities and related social sciences. Advancing scholarship by awarding fellowships and strengthening relations among learned societies is central to ACLS's work. This year, ACLS will award more than \$16 million to over 300 scholars across a variety of humanistic disciplines.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,138 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu>).

March 18 2016

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