

Karla Larrañaga abstract

Research project:

Karla Larrañaga is a first-generation Chicana from Inglewood, California and a doctoral student in the Chicana and Chicano studies department. Her dissertation project titled, "Venerations in Cyberspace: Chicana Popular Catholicism, Latina Feminist Theology, and the Digital Transformation of La Virgen de Guadalupe's Altar", examines online community formation among Guadalupanas as well as digital performances of piety through digital cultural production. This project situates these online religious performances and rituals as valuable tools for producing knowledge, identity, and sacred space. Online Guadalupana community members utilize media and technology to form communities and transform the digital space into a sacred space through user engagement and virtual postings. These virtual sacred spaces become digital altars and an archive of memory that defies borders and boundaries associated with able-bodiedness, location, and citizenship status. This project aims to expand our understanding of Guadalupana religious performance and ritual so that those who participate in alternative acts of worship are recognized widely. An understanding of these online communities expands the definition of community and care; it creates a level of understanding that validates these communities, online sacred spaces, and alternative rituals.