

SLAS 2009: Annual Conference Report

University of Leeds

26-27 March 2009

General intro

Organising committee:

Polly Wilding (POLIS)

Marie Osborne (POLIS)

Manuel Barcia (SPLAS)

The 2009 SLAS Conference was held on 26-27 March at the University of Leeds, with the Parkinson Building as the focal point for most of the conference activities. Alongside the 36 panels that took place, the programme included short-film showings, a documentary showing, live 10-piece salsa band, formal conference dinner, two buffet meals and three coffee breaks. There was a help desk open from Thursday morning through to Friday at 5.30pm. Five publishers had stalls and there was also a book signing.

The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive, apart from a few small points mentioned below. We personally felt that the programme was well received and that the huge time and effort put in beforehand paid off in terms of the smooth running of events. We would also therefore like to thank everyone at SLAS who put in their comments and suggestions in the early stages to make sure we covered all the bases, as much as was possible. We could not have done it without the support and commitment of numerous other members of staff at the University of Leeds who helped us, often going way beyond what was expected. The success of this conference, as much as it was, was equally due to the help of people behind the scenes.

Timetabling

1. In the early planning stages, and after consultation with the SLAS committee, it was decided to break with tradition and move the conference to Thursday / Friday and culminate with the conference dinner on the Friday, hoping this would allow people to let their hair down without having to present the next morning. However, this did mean, unfortunately, that one oversight was the fact that some universities were still teaching this week. See below, notes for next year.
2. Call for panel proposals went out in September and the deadline was 31 October.
3. Panel abstracts went online in November and the call for paper proposals requested panellists communicated directly with panel convenors (it is necessary to stress that this is the convenors responsibility as not all messages got passed on efficiently)
4. Deadline for final changes and for payment: 20 February, though registrations did keep trickling in beyond that – luckily the catering services were considerate and as flexible as was reasonable
5. Actual acceptance of changes and payments went on to the last minute making programming difficult (especially in view of the large amount of paper to be printed), but this meant there were only minimal omissions / changes to the programme
6. Due to the change in dates, this meant that the official SLAS meetings (committee meeting and BLAR) had to be accommodated before the start of the panel sessions on Thursday at 1.30pm (NB See Timetable attached below)

Publicity and communications

1. Email updates were sent out regularly to interested parties, convenors, panellists and delegates. Some of these were targeted, and convenors frequently assisted us in this by passing on messages and reminders to their panellists.

2. The website was used to put up the main conference information and to publish calls for papers and the list of proposed panels. Updates to panels were published at regular intervals.
3. The dedicated conference email was used extensively – to ensure information was kept in one place as well as to allow access for all three of the organisers. Latterly, Marie Osborne's email became more heavily used for payment and requests regarding registration.

Panels / presenters

1. From the start we stayed in touch with panel organizers who were in charge of recruiting those interested in joining their panels
2. We had a total of 38 panels with 181 participants
3. Sessions took place in both the Emmanuel Centre and the Parkinson Building in an effort to keep the rooms within as close walking distance as possible
4. All participants were given conference packs with information about all matters related to the conference

Evening events and catering

1. There were two main evening events, the Blackwell Conference Reception followed by a film showing on Thursday and the Santander Conference Dinner followed by a Salsa night on Friday.
2. The Blackwell Conference Reception brought people together. It also served for the outgoing SLAS president to welcome all the participants and to acknowledge the work undertaken by the organizing committee in the previous months
3. The Santander Conference dinner was attended by all the participants plus the Deputy Lord Mayor and Mayoress of Leeds. Here the new SLAS president was introduced and the Deputy Lord Mayor welcomed the participants to the city.

Notes for next year

1. Timing of event / oversight: not all Universities break up at the same time, hence a few reported being unable to attend. However, we received generally positive feedback for change to Thursday / Friday.
2. An official policy re a rate for retired / unwaged people is needed
3. Treasurer – availability for paying bursary holders. Fix a time place in advance for delegates to get cheques to avoid confusion.

Feedback from participants:

The highlights:

- Getting new social research contacts
- The conversations following panels and exchange of innovative
- Input during and after presentations
- Quality of the papers
- Wide range of panels
- Intimate and well organised
- A nice friendly atmosphere
- Good correspondence prior to the conference
- Organization and food was very good.

Things that could have been improved on:

- Safe storage for left luggage and coats
- More time for each panellist (30 mins)
- Some sessions seemed to repeat themselves
- No email address list for speakers

- Have timetable of sessions in advance
- Getting hold of bursary money during the conference

Conference Fees and numbers registered (including cancellations)

Type	Cost*	N ^o . Attended
Full Conference Fee	£165	106
Post Graduate Conference Fee	£110	57
Thursday Fee (we didn't adverts this option)	£65	4
Postgraduate Thursday Fee (we didn't advertise this option)	£50	3
Friday Fee	£100	18
Post Graduate Friday Fee	£85	8
Students (Santander sponsorship) – not in fees total	£110	10

* Costs above do not include the fees if they're not SLAS members. Delegates had to pay a supplement of £25 (students £12).

Since we knew we were in credit, we paid back a number of people who were registered but unable to attend, as well as some odd figures due to overpayments and currency conversion rates – consequently, the total income from registration fees is slightly random.

Stands/Advertising information (Costs to Companies / Organisations)

- Leaflet in conference pack £30
- Stand for a single stand/table £150 (additional tables at increments of £50)
- £95 for half page advert in conference booklet

Company	Type
Liverpool University Press	Stand + Leaflet in pack
Maney Publishing	Stand + Leaflet in pack
Routledge/Taylor Francis	Stand + Leaflet in pack
Blackwell Publishing Ltd, John Wiley & Sons	Stand + 2 add tables. 1/2 page ad in conf. pack
Pathfinder Books	Stand (Small company, reduced rate £110)
Eurospan Ltd	Leaflet in pack
Oxford University Press	Leaflet in pack
JISLAC	Leaflet in pack (fee waiving)
Manchester Univeristy Press	Leaflet in pack
Boydell & Brewer	Leaflet in Pack
Zed Books	Leaflet in Pack
Durham Modern Languages Series	Leaflet in Pack

Conference Timetable

Thursday		Friday	
		08.00	Registration (ends 10.00)
		09.00	Panels B1
		10.30	Coffee break
11.00	BLAR Editorial Meeting	11.00	Panels B2
11.00	Short film showings*		
12.00	SLAS Committee Meeting	12.30	**PILAS lunch
12.00	Registration	12.30	Buffet Lunch
13.00	BLAR / Wiley editing demonstration		
13.30	Panels A1	14.00	Panels C1
15.00	Coffee break		
15.30	Panels A2	15.30	Coffee break
		16.00	Panels C2 (ends 17.30)
17.15	AGM (all invited)		
18.15	Wine Reception ¹	18.00	Plenary: Prof. Maxine Molyneux, (ILAS)
19.15	Buffet Dinner	19.00	Wine Reception ²
21.00	Film showing - La segunda conquista	19.45	Conference Dinner
		21.30	Music ³
22.30	END		END

¹ Sponsored by BLAR and Wiley Blackwell.

² Sponsored by the University of Leeds.

³ Sponsored by Banco Santander.

SHORT FILM SHOWINGS

Parallel to registration, we will be showing a number of short films for your entertainment☺
The provisional list of films includes a mixture of live action and animation, with some very strong films:

- Lucia
- En Agosto
- Sin Decir Nada
- Powerhouse
- Debajo
- Lección Relampago
- Rojo Red
- Sopa de Pescado
- Cafe Paraíso
- This is not a Fly

Many thanks to the Discovering Latin America Film Festival, in particular the directors Neal Baker and Sandra Tabares, who have provided the films.