

**TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
DEPARTMENT OF HISPANIC STUDIES**

**ANIMATING THE ALIEN NATION: MEXICAN FILMMAKERS
COUNTERING RACIST STEREOTYPES IN ANIMATED FILMS**

DR CATHERINE LEEN (MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY)

Wednesday 22 March 2017 at 5 p.m.

Arts Building, Room 3051



Children's animated films reflect the world that they encounter and shape many of their expectations as they mature. While there has been concern generally about the amount of 'screen time' young children are allowed to have and the impact of this on their development, there have also been concerns about the content of the films they consume. U.S. entertainment giant Disney feeds children a steady stream of stories centred on passive princesses who need to be rescued, while all people of colour are all but invisible. This lack of representation is compounded by a repetitive set of stereotypes in the portrayal of so-called ethnic others as either comic sidekicks or villains. This talk will examine the ways in which Mexican filmmakers are countering such negative portrayals of their culture through the work produced by animators in Mexico and particularly by those working in the United States. I will focus particularly on Jorge R. Gutiérrez and Guillermo del Toro's *The Book of Life* (2014), a film that celebrates Mexico's Day of the Dead.

Dr Catherine Leen, Senior Lecturer, is Head of Spanish and Latin American Studies at Maynooth University – her research centers on Mexican and Chicana/o literature and cinema, and Argentine and Paraguayan visual culture and literature. In 2008 she received a Fullbright Scholarship to conduct research at the Chicana/o Centre at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her most recent publication explores the relevance of Chicana/o Studies outside the United States. Entitled *International Perspectives on Chicana/o Culture: "This World is My Place,"* it is coedited by Dr Niamh Thornton (Routledge, 2014). She is currently completing a monograph on Latina/o filmmakers and Mexico.